Thirteenth Loksabha

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Participants : Sinha Shri Yashwant ,Topdar Shri Tarit Baran ,Aiyar Shri Mani Shankar ,Dev Shri Sontosh Mohan ,Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan ,Bansal Shri Pawan Kumar ,Paswan Dr. Sanjay ,Chinmayanand Shri ,Badnore Shri Vijayendra Pal Singh

13.01 hrs.

Title: Discussion on the Finance Bill, 2002.(Not concluded).

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2002-2003, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, since the presentation of the Finance Bill on 28th February, 2002, I have received, as in earlier years, a large number of representations from Members of Parliament, representatives of trade and industry, and other interested parties. I have carefully considered all the representations, and I am convinced of the merit of some of them.

I wish to reiterate, Sir, that a moderate tax regime and a large number of exemptions go ill together. I do recognise that those who are accustomed to enjoying the benefits of exemptions would like to resist the withdrawal of such exemptions. While this cannot be accepted as a matter of rule, in some specific areas, I am inclined to make some changes.

Many industry associations have argued that the four per cent excise duty at different stages of production would lead to a cascading effect which is not desirable. I accept the logic of their argument. I, therefore, propose to exempt from excise duty the specified parts and accessories of those items

that have been subjected to four per cent excise duty. These include parts and accessories of bicycles, parts of hand-pumps, parts of toys, and parts of umbrellas.

I also propose to allow exemption on waste and scrap arising in the course of manufacture of items that attract the new levy of four per cent.

Roofing Tiles have been subjected to four per cent excise duty. Since the industry is labour-intensive and such tiles are used extensively by poor people, I propose to withdraw the excise levied on roofing tiles.

Sir, I am not convinced about the removal of four per cent excise duty on any other item. I wish to emphasise that a small unit producing all these items is already eligible to exemption on clearances up to one crore rupees in a financial year. This is a very important point, Sir, that all the new items which have been brought into excise net at four per cent will be entitled to a small-scale industry concession.

I am informed that excise duty on pre-recorded audio cassettes would accentuate piracy to the further disadvantage of genuine cassette producers. Keeping this in view, I propose to restore exemption from four per cent excise duty on such cassettes.

Sir, my Budget proposals included a special package for the textiles industry. While I had reduced the overall burden of excise duty on the textile fabrics, I had proposed withdrawal of certain exemptions relating to yarn and processed fabrics. I had proposed that the exemption applicable to hand-processing of textile fabrics by independent processors shall be confined to only three processes, namely, scouring, hydro-extraction and calendaring. I have received representations for extending the exemption to some other processes also. On a careful consideration of these representations, I propose to include padding (including backfilling), damping and flannelette raising in the list of exempted processes, even if carried on with the aid of power.

Sir, I also propose to reduce the rate of Excise Duty on hand processed cotton fabrics processed by independent processors using open air stenters from 12 per cent to eight per cent. With the availability of deemed credit to such processors, the net incidence of Duty will be only four per cent. I also propose to exempt cotton waste yarn up to two counts cleared in hank form from this Duty.

Sir, the House may recall that I have withdrawn the exemption from Excise Duty on granite manufactured in the small scale sector. I had proposed this to bring parity with marble. Many hon. Members have suggested to me that there could be another manner of achieving parity. In deference to their wishes, I propose to extend the benefit of small scale sector Excise Duty exemption scheme to both granite as well as marble. I also propose to extend the benefit of SSI Duty exemption scheme to Bengal Lights.

I also propose to exempt aviation gas from the special Excise Duty. This would reduce the cost of training of pilots in the country… (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had extended the exemption from Inland Air Travel tax in respect of flights to and from the North-Eastern States.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR): Sir, thank you.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: This was already done. I propose to extend similar exemption to Andaman & Nicobar Islands, to Lakshadweep and to Leh.

Sir, I have received representations that any surge in the import of dairy products like butter oil would affect domestic producers of dairy products and the milk farmers. In order to allay any such fears, I propose to increase the Customs Duty on dairy products, including butter and butter oil, from 30 per cent to the WTO bound rate of 40 per cent.

Sir, the House may recall that I had proposed imposition of service tax on several new services including Life Insurance. I have received representations that service tax proposed on life insurance services should

be confined only to the risk premium part only. I accept this demand and notification on service tax would be issued accordingly.

Sir, in my Budget speech I had announced that Special Economic Zones would be entitled to procure Duty free equipment, raw materials, components etc. whether imported or purchased locally. It is also the policy that supplies to the Special Economic Zones should be considered as physical exports for the purpose of Duties, tariffs and Central Sales Tax. I propose to move amendments in the Finance Bill to make appropriate changes in the Customs Act, in the Central Excise Act and in the Central Sales Tax Act to implement this policy.

Sir, now I come to the Direct taxes. After considering the various representations received from different quarters and specially from Members of Parliament, I also propose to make some changes in my proposals relating to Direct taxes. While introducing the Finance Bill I proposed that the tax rebate under section 88 of the Income Tax Act shall be allowed at the existing rate of 20 per cent only to persons having taxable income up to Rs. 1.50 lakh. The rebate was proposed to be reduced to ten per cent for persons having taxable income between Rs. 1.50 lakh and Rs. five lakh. Now, to mitigate the additional tax burden of this proposal on the middle income group, I now propose to allow the rebate at the rate of 15 per cent to persons having taxable income between Rs. 1.50 lakh to Rs. five lakh. I also propose to enhance the maximum amount of investment eligible for rebate from Rs. 80,000 to rupees one lakh which will include Rs. 30,000 specifically for investment in infrastructure bonds as against Rs. 20,000 at present.

These two concessions will, I am sure, be satisfying the taxpayer.

In the Finance Bill I have proposed to tax dividends and incomes from mutual funds, except equity-oriented funds, in the hands of the recipients at the rates applicable to them. Such income will be subject to tax deduction at source at the rate of 10 per cent. Keeping in view the difficulties which may be faced by small taxpayers, particularly senior citizens, I propose to allow a deduction in respect of this income under

Section 80L of the Income Tax Act within the overall ceiling of Rs.9000 provided for in that section. I also propose to provide that tax will be deducted at source only if the amount received from the company or mutual fund exceeds Rs.1000.

The 100 per cent deduction of export profits under Section 10A of the Income Tax Act is available to units set up in Special Economic Zones only till the assessment year commencing 1-4-2009. In consonance with the Exim Policy announced recently by the Government which seeks to give a prominent role to undertakings set up in the Special Economic Zones, I propose to allow the 100 per cent deduction to all SEZ units commencing production on or after 1st April, 2002 for a period of five years and thereafter at 50 per cent for the next two years.

Under the existing provisions the tax holiday provided to Export Oriented Units under Sections 10A and 10B of the Income Tax Act is withdrawn if there is a change in beneficial ownership of the undertaking. I propose to provide that this restriction will not apply in cases where the undertaking owned by a firm or a sole proprietary concern is transferred to a company by way of succession to a business, subject to certain conditions.

I would also like to mention here that we had imposed a very small burden on companies covered by Sections 10A and 10B, specially the information technology companies. The security surcharge was sought to be levied by taxing 10 per cent of their income and imposing a surcharge on them. I would like to reiterate that this is just a very temporary surcharge only for this year and I hope that my friends in the information technology industry will bear with this.

The tax incentives provided under Section 80-IB to undertakings set up in industrially backward States and Districts was available only to units set up before 31-3-2002. I propose to extend this benefit to new units set up in such areas during a further period of two years ending on 31-3-2004.

In the Finance Bill I have proposed that no part of the income of religious and charitable trusts and institutions can be accumulated for a period

exceeding five years. Considering the difficulties pointed out by various trusts and institutions, I now propose to allow accumulation of 15 per cent of their income for an unlimited period. However, any amount exceeding 15 per cent of the income can be accumulated only up to a period of five years.

All subscribers to a telephone are presently required to file an income tax return under the 1/6 scheme which is now in force in all urban areas of the country. Several representations have been received requesting deletion of this criteria from the scheme as telephones are now easily available even in smaller towns at low cost and owning a telephone may no longer be indicative of a potential taxpayer. Considering these representations I propose to remove the criterion of subscription to a telephone under 1/6 scheme and limit it only to cellular telephones. I hope we will hear less of cellular telephones in this House now.

There are also other amendments proposed resulting in minor modifications of the provisions of the Bill for which I do not want to take the time of the House at this time. Copies of notifications regarding excise duty changes shall be laid on the Table of the House in due course.

The modifications in my proposals are estimated to involve a revenue loss of Rs.1450 crore in respect of indirect taxes including service tax, and Rs.700 crore in respect of direct taxes.

Together, this adds upto Rs. 2,150 crore. If we add to this, Rs. 700 crore that the Government will not now get as a result of the reduction in the price of LPG, the total change after the presentation of the Budget is Rs. 2,850 crore.

The point which I would like to submit to the House, through you, Sir, is that in a Budget where the Expenditure Budget is Rs. 4,10,000 crores this Rs. 2,850 crore is not a very significant sum of money and we will be able to take care of it in the course of the year as we go along by compression of expenditure on non essentials and also by increased tax collection. So, the integrity of the Budget remains intact.

Sir, I had announced on the floor of the House that the maximum limit of Rs. 2 lakh per annum per person for investment in the Government of India Relief Bonds will be removed in respect of retiring/retired employees including those in the private sector to enable them to put their entire terminal benefits in these bonds. I am glad to inform the House that this scheme is being further liberalised to cover retired employees for re-investment of any other savings attributable to employment in Relief Bonds without any monetary ceiling. So, the employees who will retire in future as well as the employees who have retired and who have put their money in Relief Bonds, are now protected from the limit of Rs. 2 lakh.

Sir, I have also been authorised by my colleague, the Communications Minister, to inform the House, through you, Sir, about some changes in the postal rates. We are observing this year as the 'Year of the Books', and in this context, the publishing industry has represented that the proposed increase in postal rates for booked package containing printed books may be dropped. This would mean a reduction of about Rs. 7 crore in the expected additional revenue of the Department of Posts which bears the heavy burden of deficit. However, with the willing cooperation of the Department, I am quite sure that this loss of Rs. 7 crore which is going as a concession to the publishing industry will be made up elsewhere and the overall loss will be limited.

Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill for consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motive moved:

> "That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 2002-03, be taken into consideration. "

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (CHANDIGARH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the opening remarks of his Budget Speech this year, the Minister of Finance Shri Yashwant Sinha -- lacking, of course, the exuberance of the

past -- admitted that the year 2001 had been a difficult year, though he attributed the failures of this Government to the general slow down in the world economic growth.

Sir, he concluded his speech by calling the Budget a Budget of consolidating, widening and deepening the economic reforms process. Going by the effect the proposals are likely to have on the common man, one wonders what consolidation does he really talk of.

Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Finance Minister that when he reported the shortfall of Rs. 20,683 crore in the net tax revenue, with a virtual admission of miserable failure in fiscal consolidation and discipline, does he feel that it sounds convincing about the Government's efforts and capacity of consolidating reforms and not fritter away possible gains?

Sir, meet the man on the street, and you will be convinced that notwithstanding some minor rollbacks announced now, the proposals of the Budget reflected in the Finance Bill will only compound his miseries and difficulties. The proposals hurt everyone other than a non-resident and a foreign company. The budgetary proposals are an attack, an attack on the middle class – really nothing short of an attack – an attack, pure and simple.

Sometimes, I agree that one has to suffer and bear pain for the ultimate gain. But here, you find no cause for such a hope. The salaried class is the worst hit. During the General Elections in 1999, an assurance was held out by the BJP that the exemption limit of income tax would be raised to Rs.1 lakh. Three years later, it remains at Rs.50,000 only, though the value of rupee has considerably eroded. The limit regarding exemption is not raised in order to maintain tax base. I can understand that, but not the obstinacy in not really bringing the persons in the income group of up to Rs.1 lakh in the slab of 10 per cent. That is what the people in that income group deserve. To further compound the ordinary tax payers' difficulties, a five per cent surcharge has been levied in the name of national security, which is today precariously placed in the hands of Shri George Fernandes, when

influence peddling in defence deals has increased. That is the time when people are being penalised to pay an additional five per cent tax.

The financial proposals reflected in the Finance Bill hit savings in a big way. For the retired senior citizens, the interest on their lifetime savings – which they invest in small savings – is perhaps the only income and they cannot really stand up against the might of the Government's arbitrariness. As in the past, even now, not only has the rate of interest on small savings been reduced but also the tax rebate allowed on savings under Section 88 of the Income Tax Act have been severely curtailed. This simply amounts to penalising those people who are financially prudent and who rather go by the sane advice of the Government to save.

Even after the announcement of a small concession made by the Finance Minister now, a person with an income of above Rs.5 lakh will not get any benefit of rebate. So far, an investment of Rs.80,000 in such saving schemes would earn a rebate of Rs.16,000. But no more! Persons with an income between Rs.1.5 lakh and Rs.5 lakh – after the concession announced now – would at the most get a tax rebate of Rs.12,000 against the earlier rebate of Rs.16,000. This provision will create an anomalous situation, where a person who earns just a little more than the limit fixed – even a rupee more than that – will lose Rs.4,000, even after the rollback.

The net result of this provision is that a person who has an income out of which he can invest a small part in savings, will have no incentive to save. And those who earn above Rs.5 lakh need not really save, perhaps this is the philosophy of the Government. For a person whose income is below Rs.1.5 lakh, this incentive is illusory. Take the example of a person whose monthly income is, say Rs.12,000.

According to the rates prevalent, he has to pay an income tax of Rs.13,800 and to save Rs.10,000, a person who is earning Rs.1,44,000 in a year – not much of an income – he will have to invest Rs.50,000 and still pay an income tax of Rs.4,000. Can he afford it? Is it really possible? So, what benefit is the Finance Minister really talking about for the poor men? It is

that section of society whose concerns have to be addressed and I am afraid the hon. Finance Minister has ignored them.

Further, the benefit of these additional rebates which was so far allowed to authors, artists, musicians, sports persons, etc. has been withdrawn. They do not come within his scheme of things now. This all is in the name of perhaps some rationalisation that the Minister talks of.

I certainly do welcome announcement about exempting the people whose income from dividend is Rs.1,000 from having to get tax deducted at source but that is not enough. Firstly, the basic change that has been effected here and is to the detriment of the people is that whereas so far it was the company paying the dividend which was subjected to tax, now it is the people who earn some dividend from their investment will have to pay the tax according to the slab they are covered by. This could mean an additional burden of 10 to 20 per cent. Is this the incentive that he wants to offer to the people to go in for saving?

Coming back to the deduction of tax at source, is that concession of Rs.1000 is not really a concession to those people with income from dividend but in a way fixation of a threshold of Rs.1000. Is that enough? You have to make a distinction between a person who earns a modest amount and a person who earns Rs.5 lakh and that is not done. The result would be, still there will be lot many hassles that a person will have to go through in the form of collecting the certificates about deduction, going to the authorities to present his case. Though he is given a period of two years to file certificates, but given the bureaucracy that we have, given the system that we have, the paper work would not be lessened in any way and there could be a case where an income derived from dividends could be nothing as compared to the problem that the man really faces and in a way by investing in a scheme like this, a person could in fact be only courting some trouble.

In his anxiety to collect more revenue, the Finance Minister has brought within the tax net, ten additional new services like the Life Insurance – on which a clarification has now been issued – rail travel agents, beauty

parlours, health clubs, fitness centres, fashion designers, cable operators, dry cleaners, inland cargo handling, storage and warehousing and event management. In all these cases the service providers will certainly pass on this five per cent tax burden to the consumers though they themselves will be added in that long list of people in our country who suffer at the hands of petty officials in the excise department. This was the point made earlier also when the concept of service tax was introduced for the first time that it is better that this tax is not put within the jurisdiction of excise department. But that representation has, perhaps, not found favour with the hon. Minister.

Sir, one peculiar thing that I find in the proposals now is that the official authorities supplying water and electricity to the citizens, the housing boards and other statutory authorities established for satisfying the need -- I am quoting from that – of housing accommodation or for the purpose of planning development or improvement of cities, towns, and villages, sports bodies, market committees, National Dairy Development Board, Prasar Bharati, and Oil Industry Development Board will now have to pay income tax. Once they are required to do so, they will, in future, certainly jack up their charges which the helpless citizens will just have to cough up.

Similarly, warehouses established by the Government for storage of foodgrains etc. were so far exempted from the payment of income tax under Section 10 Clause 29, but no more so. Sir, on the one hand, the Government is at pains to emphasise that it wants to pay special attention to increasing storage capacity of foodgrains. Now, when the Government taxes the warehouses on the rents received by it for storage of foodgrains etc., is it not only paying the lip service to that? Will this not deter addition of more warehouses? Will this not adversely affect the warehousing and storage activity in the country?

Sir, it seems that the Government has taken care to spare no one in the country. So far casual and non-recurring receipts below Rs.5000 on account of say contributing an article in a newspaper or delivering a talk somewhere – this is not so specified but I presume so – such people were exempted from payment of income tax. Now, in the name of

rationalisation, this exemption is withdrawn. Also, the Finance Bill has a sun-set clause putting an end to exemption in respect of income by way of interest or premium on redemption of certain notified bonds.

Sir, in increasing the tax burden of a common man, sight is lost of his diminishing capacity to pay because of inflation. No concession -- whatever has been granted anywhere accounts for the erosion of the value of rupee. But surprisingly 'inflation' is invoked as the justification for enhancing by 75 per cent the presumptive income of ordinary truck operator. The presumptive income of truck operators running two-three trucks, has been raised by 75 per cent in the name of inflation. Is there a justification for that?

We have heard the Finance Minister talk of extending benefits, he referred to that now again, to Special Economic Zones and Software Parks. But in the Finance Bill, he has knocked off `10 per cent of the deduction permissible so far on profits and gains from export earnings of new undertakings established in Trade Free Zone'. So, what you are giving on the one hand, you are taking away on the other. Perhaps the provision which has gone unnoticed is 10 per cent which they saved earlier has now been knocked off.

Same is the position of new undertakings established in Software Technology Parks, Electronic Hardware Technology Parks about which much was talked of earlier and the Special Economic Zones. While, despite I would again say - the concessions announced now, tax concessions have been withdrawn and interest on savings have been cut, we find that there are a large number of provisions which really go to hurt the common man. I know the sermon that the countrymen get in this regard is that hard decisions have to be taken. But, what do you give the common man in return?

I would like to emphasise that the most inexplicable stance, rather the double-crossing – I am constrained to use that word for the Government – of the gullible public by the Government is the denial to honour on maturity the National Saving Certificate issued in the name of HUFs. A

large number of people who have bought the National Saving Certificates waited for five to six years for their maturity. Now, when they go to the Post Offices and other authorities for encashing them, they are being turned away. Have you ever heard of such a thing being done by the Government? A private person could find himself behind prison bars for such an act. And you, Mr. Finance Minister, consider this to be your sovereign right!

There is nothing in this Finance Bill to cheer about, reduction of Excise Duty on tea notwithstanding. Imported liquor, I would humbly like to remind the hon. Finance Minister, on which he has reduced the Customs Duty from 210 per cent to 182 per cent, is not everybody's cup of tea.

There is a lot of self-adulatory talk by the hon. Finance Minister from time to time. We are told that tax administration is strengthened, evasions are checked and procedures are made hassle-free. All this sounds fine. But such claims fall on the ground when stereo-type notices are issued to persons – I think this must have come to the notice of the hon. Finance Minister – who are not liable to pay tax while tax evaders flaunt their unaccounted for riches with impunity.

I welcome the announcement made by the Finance Minister to take out telephone connections from the one-by-six scheme. But has it ever occurred to him that bank lockers need to be included in the list? The recent unearthing of crores and crores of rupees in the bank lockers standing in the names of various relatives of the scam-tainted Chairman of the Punjab Public Service Commission has brought out this fact quite prominently. I would like to ask him whether he would take note of this and make it mandatory for the banks to convey information about hiring of lockers along with the PAN to the Income Tax authorities.

It is because the bank locker is one surest and so far considered to be the safest mode of stashing ill-gotten money.

Coming back to the tax proposals and the Finance Bill, the Finance Minister expects to mop up an additional amount of about Rs.6000 crore

from direct taxes. Since it is now Rs.700 crore less, it is Rs.5300 crore. But I do not know whether he has given anything to the tax payers other than dreams and false hopes. Last year's Budget was hailed as a dream Budget but ultimately it turned out to be a nightmare for the people. The portents are no better this time. It is still worse.

The Finance Minister talks of economic growth. It is the most important target. It is what you have to really work for to raise the living standard of every ordinary citizen of the country. But does he expect to raise the economic growth without generating employment? Where are the "one crore jobs every year". The Prime Minister assured to the people from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

Let me say that we do not oppose, in principle, the policy of privatisation and globalisation of economy. But we certainly feel concerned about their handling thereof. Sir, the Government's failure on many fronts has not accelerated but rather decelerated investment and the hope of enhancing job opportunities has not fructified at all. Rather, job securities have shrunk all the more with the blow that you are inflicting on the small scale industry. You said that the manufacturers of items which are covered by the 4 per cent excise duty shall be treated as small scale industry. It is fine. But what are you doing for the small scale industry? You are bleeding them. With the wounds inflicting on the small scale industries, more and more people are losing jobs as the small scale industries are getting sick and going out of the market. You seem to have imported even the growth process. I have no objection, if you could learn something from others. But where is that growth? I would like to know that. Perhaps, this complacent Government is not aware of large scale retrenchments, lay-offs and lock-outs with the workers forced to look for work at low and subsistence levels of earning. People are being thrown out. They are at the mercy of wolves. A person who was earning Rs.7000 is not getting a job of even Rs.2000 today. You may justify it saying that these are the market forces at work. But you have got to see as to what are the conditions in our country, what are the expectations of people here and how do you really meet them.

I may have missed the fine print of his proposals. But I would urge the Finance Minister to kindly point out anything which has spurred or will spur employment. Today, even engineers, qualified IT professionals and MBAs are desperately looking for jobs.

Sir, there is no provision at all in the Finance Bill which one can relate to a desire to provide a revival package to our industry. Compete or perish is your buzz word. But no tangible and worthwhile conditions are created to encourage our entrepreneurs. Rather it seems that the Government is content with reducing all our young men and women to sales persons for foreign goods. Imports have been allowed to an extent that our own industry has been totally displaced by the proponents of *Swadshi.* Sir, It is perhaps not their ideology but only a ploy.

In the name of strengthening the tax administration, the provision that allows deduction in computation of taxable income, of sums paid to approved associations and institutions for carrying out programmes of conservation of natural resources and afforestation is being withdrawn. The reason : failure of the Government to monitor the same properly. So, the prescription is to do away with it.

According to the Finance Minister's proposals, excise duty is expected to bring in an additional amount of Rs. 6,700 crore, while measures relating to customs duty would result in the revenue loss of Rs. 2,200 crore. He calls that also as duty rationalisation. But certainly this will push up prices at a time when the demand is already sluggish. For the poor man, the cooking gas will certainly go out of reach.

There have been announcements of certain roll backs immediately after the presentation of the Budget, particularly relating to the price of LPG then and certain other things now. But this, though I welcome, is not a very healthy trend. This shows the muddled thinking of the Government not really being responsive to the people's needs. It is the pressure exerted from within the party, which made the Finance Minister to succumb. Taking the example and alluding to a reference made by Shri L.K. Advani earlier in a different context, relating to the Prevention of Terrorism

Ordinance, he said the Government is in a 'win-win' situation. Let me tell the Government that it is now in a 'lose-lose' situation. You may have announced the concessions. But the people who voted you to power are now convinced that they were mistaken in doing so, that their future is not safe in your hands and that in your scheme of things they stand nowhere. You have given that message clear to them, whatever you may do now.

I was talking of the LPG. The Government says that it wants even the rural households to give up the use of bio-mass fuel. Statements are made about the large number of distributorship opened in the rural areas but you dangle this LPG cylinder at them tantalisingly. It is not within their reach. That is what the hon. Finance Minister has to take care of. So, these proposals will certainly price out the poor. In this connection, I would also like to refer to the hike in the PDS kerosene price.

Since the industrial growth hit a ten-year low last year, it was expected that steps would be taken to encourage investment, to reduce corporate tax and to abolish Minimum Alternate Tax. But nothing has been done. Only the foreign companies have been obliged. Their tax has been reduced from 48 per cent to 40 per cent, and not for the domestic companies who are clamouring for this, who want to invest but find no incentive for doing so.

I would like to know what is the strategy to reverse the economic slow down. The Finance Minister, permit me to say, sounds unconvincing and non-serious when he talks of implementing a comprehensive agenda for second generation reforms. What is that agenda? Where is it visible? Where are the tangible effects thereof?

In all fairness, I would like to say that I find two welcome provisions in the Bill relating to Information Technology and Telecommunication sector. The reduction in customs duty on import of components will certainly help the so-far ignored IT hardware sector. We have made a recommendation to that effect in the Standing Committee. The manufacturers of hardware were really pressing for that, they were pleading for that very desperately. That has been accepted. But we did expect one more further step. That was to provide for some legislative measure to encourage setting up of a world-

class foundry, the need of which is desperately felt in this country. In the absence of it, our hardware industry in the IT sector is not doing what we really can do in that sector.

Then, I come to the decision to allow an industrial undertaking engaged in the business of providing telecommunication services related to infrastructure. He will have to check up about the definition because the other Ministry, at times, talks differently. I would like to know whether it is the 'telecommunication services related to infrastructure' or the 'telecommunication services-related infrastructure'. In any case, these companies will now have the benefit of carry forward of losses and unabsorbed depreciation in case of a merger of the company. I would certainly have no hesitation in welcoming that. But this benefit really needs to be extended not to a particular segment of the sector but to the entire sector; subject of course, to one rider that all the private companies would honour their commitment to provide a specified number of Village Public Telephones. So far, they have failed to honour this commitment and the Government has failed to enforce it.

Under Section 80 IA of the Income-Tax Act, exemption is available to an undertaking which has started or which starts providing telecommunication services in the period from 1st of April 1995 to 31st March 2003. This was done to attract more investment in the sector which is necessary for expansion and development. But in today's competitive environment, the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and the MTNL have not been extended this benefit on the ground that they are the successors of an Authority, that is, the Department of Telecommunication Services which had come into business much before this date of 1st April 1995. This does not stand to logic. The BSNL and the MTNL have been making heavy investments over all this period to expand telecommunication services in this country. Where the private companies have failed to honour their commitment that I was referring to, the Government is casting that responsibility on the BSNL to provide VPTs in those places also. When that is the situation, when the BSNL, I have found , is really working hard to expand the services in the country and achieve the tele-density that we have targeted

for, it is necessary to extend this benefit to the BSNL and the MTNL by amending Section 80 IA of the Income-Tax Act.

The performance or the goal of any Government has to be to raise the living standards of the people, in providing for the social welfare measures and taking care to ensure that we do not continue to suffer from the scourge of illiteracy. But here, besides the Ninety-third amendment to the Constitution which makes the school education a fundamental right of the children, nothing much has been done. There has been some increase in the allocation to the Ministry of Education but that is not really enough. The year 2002, I hope the hon. Minister acknowledges, is the year of quality education. He seems to have been oblivilious of this when provisions were not incorporated to promote quality education in the country.

I would now come very briefly to the postal tariff. There is one small amendment announced now. But the basic thing remains and that is beyond comprehension and logic as to why the tariff on the printed postcard has been raised from Rs.3 to Rs.6 while that of the envelop has been raised only from Rs.4 to Rs.5. I am only using this in comparison, otherwise it is quite a high hike. In the case of competition cards, it has been raised from Rs.5 to Rs.10. The printed postcard is mostly used by people to convey messages about obituaries, memorial service, *kriyas*, etc. But in all those cases, people do not use the cards which you supply. You cannot really say that you have to spend a lot in the production of the cards. They use their own cards, but affix only the stamp. Perhaps you do not want them to do that.

Similarly, who will suffer the most in the case of enhancement from Rs.5 to Rs.10 in the case of competition cards? It is the students. Students respond to various quiz competitions and other competitions organised by television, radio, magazines and other media. I would really like to know as to what really went into this. I could understand that if that card produced by the department is used. They use their own cards. Will it not really lead to a situation where people will not like to use those cards and go in for envelopes? Will that be cheaper for the Government, envelopes

which they provide, on which you have embossed stamp of Rs. four or five now?

सभापति महोदय : बंसल जी, मैं आपको रोक नहीं रहा हूं लेकिन आपको 40 मिनट हो गये हैं। आप अपने दल का समय देख लीजिये।

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Banks have been allowed to deduct up to 7.5 per cent of the total income as against the present deduction of five per cent of the total income against the provisions made by them for bad and doubtful debts, ostensibly to strengthen the financial position of the banks. This sounds all right. But I have a fear that this may not really give rise to more NPAs. That is what I would want the hon. Minister to take care of.

13.59 hrs. (Shrimati Margaret Alva ***in the Chair***)

The NDA assumed office amidst hope and expectation. The BJP had projected itself as a party with a difference. During the campaign it had led the people up the path of milk and honey. It had known that the vision of Rajiv Gandhi and concrete steps taken by him to promote information technology, telecommunications, space development and technology missions would yield results. The BJP had also seen the potential benefits flowing out of the policy followed by the Congress Government, in liberalising the economy. But the latest elections gave a clear message to BJP for its failure to deliver and the newspapers carried bold captions – "People disinvest in BJP."

14.00 hrs.

'For CEO Vajpayee, the bottomline is, 'stocks are falling', 'State Polls handcuff PM', 'Vote of No-Confidence in PM'. This is the situation today.

Madam, I do not want to be termed as a prophet of doom, but realising that this Government has proved itself unequal to the challenges of a vast and diverse nation, unequal to the challenges of managing the economy, I can

only say that if people expected any improvement in their lives during the regime of BJP led NDA, they are sadly mistaken.

To conclude, when I express my inability to support the budgetary and finaicial proposals reflected in the Finance Bill, 2002, I humbly seek to represent the common man on the street.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (BARRACKPORE): Madam, first of all I would like to point out the background of this Budget. The background as shown in the *Economic Survey* is, the industrial production registered a significantly lower growth of 5 per cent in 2000-01 compared to a growth rate of 6.7 per cent in 1999-2000. It has come down gradually. It was 5.3 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 both in manufacturing and electricity sectors.

The manufacturing sector, electricity sector, small scale sector, cooperative sector and public sector – which has been thrown away, not to speak of the public sector in entirety – in all these sectors there has been a gradual slow down, and that has attained the highest proportion last year. This is the acme of the story which forms the background before presenting this Budget.

The growth in the manufacturing sector fell further to 2.4 per cent which was significantly lower than 6 per cent recorded during the corresponding period of last year. From 6 per cent in last year, it has come down to 2.4 per cent now. The growth rate in the manufacturing sector during the first 9 months in the current year was the lowest during the last 10 years.

Similarly, electricity generation growth rate 2.7 per cent was also significantly lower than 4.8 per cent recorded during the corresponding period of last year and also the lowest during the last 10 years. This is the background where we stand now. I will not elaborate much. But there are other figures also.

I now go on to infrastructure sector which has been much talked about during the Budget speech and various other deliberations. What do we see

there? The performance of infrastructure is largely a reflection of the performance of the economy. This is what the *Economic Survey* says. The infrastructure investment is measured by six key infrastructure industries, the coal industry, electricity, crude oil, petroleum refinery products, sale of steel and cement. Having a figure of 26.7 per cent as the overall industrial production in 1993-94, taking the base as 100, the overall industrial production recorded a growth of 2 per cent during 2001-02 as compared to 6.8 per cent during the corresponding period of last year.

Among the six core infrastructure industries, the performance of the cement industry is improved expecting a growth of 6.4 per cent compared to 2.1 per cent in the corresponding period. This is the only growth there. There has been a deceleration in the growth rates of power, steel, refinery, etc. Crude petroleum has shown a negative growth during April-December 2001-02. This is attributable to the socio-economic management programme, etc. This is the economic scenario when the Budget was placed. The Budget could not give any direction to the improvement towards a positive gain in this economic growth or stopping the slow down and the growth further.

In this background, when the economy was reeling, social tension mounted to an extreme height on *mandir shiladhan* and so on and so forth and the Government deliberately participated in constructing temples, mosques or other shrines. As it has been done in the case of temples, it must be done in the case of other shrines also. A huge tension was mounted throughout the country. Kindly see *The Times of India* on the day when the Budget was being placed. Budget is the second item. The first item is, "Gujarat burns, towns under siege." Kindly see the newspaper of 2nd March, that is one day after the Budget was placed. After that, there was no mention about the Budget. Usually, on the Budget day and on the next two or three days, the media people dedicate themselves in discussing the Budget. This time it could not be done because of the background I have explained. It should take the front seat for discussion, but it could not be done this year. Never this has happened in our country after Independence. And in this *melee*, the Budget was placed. The General Budget and the Railway Budget sought to address only one side of the economy by conferring give-aways to the

capitalists and landlords' lobby. Each and every measure of the revenue front announced in the Budget was for imposing more and more burden on the already poor masses and concessions to the capitalists and big landowners.

This has been done systematically for the last few years in the name of first generation reforms and, now in the garb of tall talks of second generation reforms. What is the balance sheet of the first generation reforms? The balance sheet of the first generation reforms has been explained in the *Economic Survey*. Some of the features have been explained in the *Economic Survey* of the Government of India. Some features have been explained by the mass movements which are taking place throughout the country against the harsh economic measures taken by the Government against the people.

There is a cruel attack on the people. What did the Budget proposals say? It said hike in excise duties totalling an amount of Rs.6,700 crore. Duties to the tune of Rs.2,200 crore have been reduced. It said of hiking of LPG prices by Rs.20 per cylinder. It increased PDS kerosene by Rs.1.50 per litre. It hiked the postal tariff by 20 per cent to 100 per cent. It reduced the subsidy on fertilizers. There was a hike in the railway fare. It imposed five per cent surcharge on income tax in the name of national security. Moreover, the reduction of interest rate on PF and small savings adds fuel to the fire. These are the Budget proposals which had been placed in the background of a huge social tension that was mounted within the country.

Now when we are discussing the Finance Bill, the fire in Gujarat has not yet abated. It is still burning.

The most important aspect of the country is this. It concerns our present and future. It concerns our conscience to discuss, that is, whether we are going to be caught in a debt trap or not. The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech assured us that although there is a danger of such a thing, the measures the Government had taken have averted the apprehension of being caught into a debt trap.

It is a governance which is dictatorial and where consensus-based decisions have no role to play. We have little time to go into an in-depth analysis of the most vital issues of the country – misplacing the targets, misplacing the issues and confusing the issues by different statements that sound like rigmaroles of effervescent Ministers.

We find in this tumult, on the one hand, a fresh series of concessions that have been granted to the private corporates and foreign capital. Just a few minutes ago, my colleague said that despite their dismal performance, a liberal approach has been taken. In the last year's Budget, concessions worth Rs.16,000 crore were granted to them. This time also, they are enjoying further concessions of 40 per cent to 48 per cent. They have also been allowed 15 per cent depreciation for new plants and machinery. There is complete freedom and total *azadi* for NRIs. Whoever be the NRI, when Indian money is taken to the Gulf and brought back, it becomes an NRI investment. So, all that one has to do is to take money from India to the Gulf countries and come back again to get concessions as an NRI. This is what has been happening. I find that no check has been placed in the Budget speech or in the Budget proposals on this dubious method of some of the NRI investments. Added to this and of great concern is the fact that 50 more items have been de-reserved from the domain of the small-scale sector. This would only marginalise the small-scale sector in favour of the monopoly houses including foreign multinationals.

I would like to know something about reforms. संस्कार क्या संहार के लिए होगा ?

Reforms have to be carried out in the interest of the country and of the people of the country. This has not to be done to squander away the assets that we have accumulated when the private sector was not entering the core industries because of economic constraints that I do not want to elaborate now. Now, when things are ready, whether it is the manufacturing sector or the infrastructure sector, these are all being given

back to the capitalists who were reluctant at one point of time at throwaway prices. We have been pointing out since the beginning that the pricing mechanism has been very faulty.

Madam, I will conclude within a few minutes. … (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have only two minutes.

… (*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Madam, the outstanding account of the corporate houses, income tax, Central Excise and Customs Duty as on 2000 was more than Rs. 62,000 crore. Most of these were from the big corporate houses. The same corporate lobby also usurped Rs. 80,000 crore from the nationalised banks in the form of non-performing assets and it is lying with them, which along with interest comes to Rs. 1,20,000 crore. So, the total becomes Rs. 1,82,000 crore. On the one hand, the Government is bringing poor workers – skilled and unskilled – of the organised sector in the tax net, and on the other hand, the Government is not taking steps to realise all these moneys from these tax evaders. So, the common man is being taxed and tax evaders are not caught … (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : In this context, I would like to conclude by saying that the hon. Minister of Finance has told the House just now in the course of placing some of the amendments to the Finance Bill, that around Rs. 2,000 crore is nothing as compared to Expenditure Budget of Rs. 4,10,000 crore. I want to implore upon the hon. Minister of Finance that compared to Rs. 4,10,000 crore Expenditure Budget, Rs. 6,000 crore is also a small amount. So, I would request the hon. Minister to concede to the demands and roll back the extra taxation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Tarit Baran Topdar, you have to roll up your speech. Your Party has got only 29 minutes. You have already taken 25

minutes. The next speaker will not get the time. It is not fair to him. There are two speakers from your party. … (*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Madam, I would like to conclude with an appeal to the hon. Minister that he may roll back the proposal of direct and indirect taxation which is affecting the common man and try to tax the corporates and catch the tax evaders and bring them to book.

डॉ. संजय पासवान (नवादा) : आदरणीय सभापति महोदय, आपने मुझे बोलने के लिए समय दिया, इसके लिए मैं धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूं। देश बड़े विकट संकट से गुजर रहा है। इस देश में कड़े निर्णय होने चाहिए, लिए जाने चाहिए, यह देश के हित के लिए होगा। भले ही तात्कालिक तौर पर कठोर किसी खास वर्ग को लग सकता है, कठिनाई हो सकती है लेकिन देश को दुनिया में एक अच्छी अर्थव्यवस्था में लाने के लिए जो प्रयास करने चाहिए, वह बहुत ईमानदारी से, पूरे मनोयोग से यह सरकार कर रही है, वित्त मंत्री जी कर रहे हैं। निसंदेह हमें उन पर गर्व है कि बा वजूद इसके कि जो कदम वे उठा रहे हैं, उससे कुछ खास वर्गों में आक्रोश होता है। मगर जब वे समझते हैं, उनको जब जानकारी होती है कि आज देश की क्या डिमांड है, आर्थिक स्थिति जो लचर हो गई थी, उसे सुधारने की आवश्यकता है, तो उससे लगता है कि यह निर्णय आवश्यक है। भले ही आज कठोर निर्णय दिखाई पड़ रहे हों, लेकिन उसके दूरगामी परिणाम राट्र के हित में होने वाले हैं। इसलिए हम सब लोग जनता में इस बात को लेकर जा रहे हैं कि इन निर्णयों का तात्कालिक परिणाम भले ही थोड़ा खराब दिखाई पड़ रहा हो, लेकिन वह भयावह नहीं है, उत्साह वर्धक है। आज हमारा देश दुनिया के चार सबसे बड़े अर्थव्यवस्था वाले देशों में शामिल हो गया है। अमेरिका, जापान और चीन के बाद भारत सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था के रूप में विकसित हो रहा है। यह इस सरकार की उपलब्धि है। खासकर वित्त मंत्री महोदय के लिए बहुत ही पोजिटिव साइन है। इस पर हमें गर्व करना चाहिए।

देश में कुछ बुनियादी चीजें है, जो सभी के लिए जरूरी हैं। हम लोग जब बचपन में पढ़ा करते थे तो हमें बताया जाता था कि मनुय के लिए बुनियादी चीजें भोजन, वस्त्र और आवास है। आज भोजन के मामले में हम सरप्लस हैं। यहां वस्त्र मंत्री जी बैठे हुए हैं, आज हमें सस्ता और सुलभ वस्त्र प्राप्त हो रहा है। आवास का निश्चित तौर से संकट था। लेकिन पिछले तीन वर्षों में इस सरकार ने इस दिशा में उत्साहवर्धक कदम उठाए हैं और इस सेक्टर को बूस्टअप किया है। आ वास को जो वित्तीय सहायता दी गई है, उससे गरीबों में, देहात में रहने वाले लोगों में आवास निर्माण के प्रति जागरुकता जगी है। अब लोगों को लोन मिलने में सुविधा हो रही है और कम सूद पर ऋण उपलब्ध हो रहा है। हमें लगता है कि निश्चित तौर से दो-तीन सालों में आवास के मामले

में भी हम आत्मनिर्भर हो जाएंगे। सब लोगों को घर मिलेगा और सिर छिपाने के लिए छत मिलेगी। हम लोग जब अपने इलाकों में जाते हैं, गांवों में जाते हैं, तो लोग आवास की समस्या बताते हैं। लेकिन अब हम निश्चित तौर से दावा कर सकते हैं इस क्षेत्र में वित्त मंत्री जी काफी उदार रहे हैं। इससे लोगों में एक अच्छा संदेश गया है। लोग अनुभव कर रहे हैं कि घर का संकट भी दूर हो रहा है। पहले हमारा लक्ष्य था कि एक साल में हम 20 लाख घर बनाएंगे। लेकिन यह खुशी की बात है कि उसको बढ़ाकर अब 28 लाख गृह निर्माण का लक्ष्य कर दिया गया है। सही मायनों में वित्त मंत्री महोदय और आवास मंत्री जी इसके लिए धन्यवाद के पात्र हैं। सबसे ऊपर माननीय प्रधान मंत्री बधाई के पात्र हैं, जिन्होंने एक साल में 20 लाख घर देने का वादा किया था और उसे बढ़ाकर 28 लाख घर कर दिया। उसमें 30 प्रतिशत ग्रोथ की गई है। इसी तरह से इंदिरा आवास योजना के लिए भी जो लक्ष्य रखा गया था, उसको भी बढ़ाया गया है और राशि को भी बढ़ाया गया है। भोजन, वस्त्र के बाद अब देश के गरीब लोग जो बिना घर के रहते थे, घर पा सकेंगे।

वित्तीय प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से जो फिस्कल डैफिसिट है, उसको कम करने का प्रयास किया गया है। यह आज काफी बड़ा संकट है। मैं इसको फिगर्स द्वारा सदन के सामने रखना चाहता हूं। नान प्लान एक्सपेंडिचर में 199-01 में इंटरेस्ट पेमेंट था वह 28 प्रतिशत था। 1995-96 में वह 38 प्रतिशत हो गया। यह दस प्रतिशत ग्रोथ 1996 में हुई। उस समय सरकार में कौन लोग बैठे हुए थे, यह हम सब जानते हैं।

यह सरकार और वित्त मंत्री कोई सांताक्लोज नहीं हैं कि सबके लिए गिफ्ट लाएंगे। यह देश कौटिल्य का है, चाणक्य का है। कौटिल्य का अर्थशास्त्र पूरी दुनिया में माना जा रहा है, कौटिल्य का अर्थशास्त्र पूरी दुनिया में शुरू हो रहा है। हम चाहते हैं कि हमारे वित्त मंत्री जी और प्रधान मंत्री जी सांताक्लोज की तरह काम न करें जो सबको गिफ्ट देते रहें और अपना घर लुटा दें, देश को लुटा दें। यह नहीं होने वाला है क्योंकि यह देश कौटिल्य का है। चाणक्य और कौटिल्य की जो पॉलिसी है, उसके हिसाब से यह देश चलेगा क्योंकि उसका दूरगामी असर पड़ने वाला है। सरकार को कुछ कड़े निर्णय करने पड़ रहे हैं जिनसे कभी-कभी जनता को कट सहना पड़ता है। साथ ही मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि 1991 से 1996 तक जो इंटरेस्ट पेमेंट पर 28 प्रतिशत से 38 प्रतिशत तक की ग्रोथ हुई थी, यह चिंताजनक बात है। हमारी सरकार ने इतने दिनों के बाद भी केवल दो प्रतिशत जो चालीस प्रतिशत अभी जिस तरह से खर्च हो रहा है, उसको हमने स्टेबल करके रखा है। यह बहुत बड़ी बात है कि उनको कितना प्रयास करना पड़ता होगा, हम जानते हैं। हम सब एमपीज जो दो करोड़ रुपया खर्च करते हैं, कितनी परेशानी होती है, हमारे क्षेत्र में ही कितने लोग हमसे नाराज होते हैं। इसी प्रकार से इस बात का अंदाजा हम कर सकते हैं कि इनको भी कितना परेशानी होती होगी।

सब्सिडी के मामले में भी हम एक मौलिक प्रश्न करना चाहेंगे कि सब्सिडी जिनके लिए निमित्त है, क्या उन तक पहुंच पाती है? यह बड़ा अहम प्रश्न है क्योंकि जो सब्सिडी की डिलीवरी होती है,

जो राज सहायता है, सब्सिडी जिनको मिलनी चाहिए, उन तक नहीं पहुंच पाती क्योंकि बिचौलिये एक बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा हजम कर जाते हैं। इसीलिए जो ब्रोकर है, जो मिडिल-मैन हैं, वे उसका एक बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा हजम कर जाते हैं। इसीलिए एक निश्चित रूप से री-थिंकिंग होनी चाहिए कि सब्सिडी के बदले में कुछ उपाय किये जाएं या जिनके लिए यह सब्सिडी निमित्त है, यह उनको ही पहुंचे, ऐसा कुछ किया जाना चाहिए। इसीलिए सब्सिडी सिस्टम एक बार फिर कटघरे में खड़ा है कि जिन गरीबों, किसानों और मजदूरों की बात की जाती है, उन तक वह सामान कैसे पहुंचे? जो मिनिमम सपोर्ट प्राइस है, अब कृषि उत्पादों के लिए है और कृषि राज्य का विाय है लेकिन कृषि सामग्री या कृषि उत्पादों की देश में मार्केटिंग कैसे हो, इसके बारे में पहली बार किसी वित्त मंत्री ने चिंता की है और ऐसे राज्य जो इस दिशा में अच्छा काम करेंगे, उनको इंसेन्टिव देने की बात भी कही गई है। यह भी एक बहुत बड़ी बात है। इसीलिए पहली बार किसी वित्त मंत्री ने यह चिंता व्यक्त की है और केवल कृषि के लिए नहीं बल्कि आधारभूत संरचनाओं और पॉवर सैक्टर के लिए चिंता की है। इसीलिए हम चाहते हैं कि जो कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं, निश्चित रूप से इन कदमों की सराहना होनी चाहिए और साथ-साथ वित्त मंत्री जी को यह चिंता छोड़नी चाहिए कि राज्य में वैस्टेड इंटरेस्ट के लोग क्या चाहते हैं।

मध्यम वर्ग की आय के लोग बहुत दुखी है, ये कितने प्रतिशत हैं? मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि ये कौन मध्यम वर्ग के लोग हैं? क्या ये वे मध्यम वर्ग के लोग हैं जिनकी आय पांच लाख रुपये सालाना है। आखिर मध्यम वर्ग के कौन लोग हैं? आज दुनिया भर में इंडिया को सर्वाइव करना है। इकोनॉमिक ग्रोथ के मामले में इंडिया को नं. वन पर आना है। इसलिए यह भी डिफाइन करने की आवश्यकता है कि ये मध्यम वर्ग के कौन लोग हैं? खासकर नौकरी-पेशे में जो लोग हैं, वे बड़ी हायतौबा मचाते हैं। हम मानते हैं कि इसमें एक बहुत बड़ी लाबी काम कर रही है, लेकिन खेत में जो काम करने वाले हैं, नौकरी में है या नौकरी के बाहर, उन लोगों की चिन्ता कौन करेगा। इसलिए सरकार को भी और ब्यूरोक्रेट्स को भी माइंड सैट करना पड़ेगा और विचारों में परिवर्तन करना होगा। सरकार को इस दिशा में कदम उठाना होगा। शुरुआत में परेशानी हो सकती है, लेकिन जो प्रयास सरकार कर रही है, उससे देश को दूरगामी लाभ होगा। सरकार के इस प्रयास का हम समर्थन करते हैं।

महोदय, वित्त विधेयक के क्लाज-126 में मैन्युफैक्चरिंग प्रोसैस को डिफाइन करने की बात कही गई है। काम्प्रिहैंसिव बनाने की बात कही गई है। इसके लिए हम सरकार की प्रशंसा करते हैं। अब स्थिति यह है कि एग्जिक्युटिव को पावर दी गई है, ताकि कन्फ्युजन को खत्म किया जा सके। सरकार के इस प्रयास का भी हम समर्थन करते हैं। इसी प्रकार क्लाज-128 में भी एग्जैम्पशन की बात है। इस क्लाज में रिबेट कैसे दिया जाता है, उसमें भी निश्चित रूप से पारदर्शिता की बात कही गई है। इसके लिए भी एग्जीक्युटिव को एकाउन्टेबल बनाया है। इस कदम का भी हम समर्थन करते हैं और सदन को भी समर्थन करना चाहिए। इसमें निश्चित रूप से जुडिशियरी में न पड़ कर केसेज को जल्दी से जल्दी डिपपोज करने की बात है। जल्दी एक्सपिडाइट करने की बात

है। क्लाज-134 में कहा है, कोर्ट में जो केसेज पैंडिग पड़े हुए हैं, पांच-दस सालों से मामले तय नहीं होते हैं, उनके लिए कहा गया है कि 180 दिनों के अन्दर, मामला तय हो या न हो, आर्डर को माना जाएगा। अधिकारों का हनन नहीं होगा। हम यह निश्चित रूप से कह सकते हैं कि सरकार जो कदम उठा रही है, उसके दूरगामी लाभ देश को होंगे और देश का हित होगा।

कहा जा रहा है, लीकर के दाम कम हो गए हैं। हम लोग तो प्रज्ञा पीने वाले हैं। अधिकांश मात्रा में जो पीने वाले हैं, वे ही ज्यादा इसके बारे में कह रहे हैं। दाम कम होने पर मन-ही-मन खुश हो रहे हैं। मत्री जी ने गैस के दाम भी वापिस लिए हैं। बड़ी अच्छी बात है। मैं कहना चाहता हूं, अगर मंत्री जी को इससे भी कठोर निर्णय करना पड़े, तो देश की जनता उनके साथ है। दल से राट्र ऊंचा है और राट्र के हित में कठोर निर्मय करने पड़े, तो हम उनके साथ हैं। जनता भी इनके साथ रहेगी, उन्हें हम इस लायक बनाएंगे और जाकर कहेंगे। आज स्थिति यह है कि लोग कहते हैं कि इनफ्लेशन रेट कम हो गया है। इनफ्लेशन रेट कम हो गया है, उसका संबंध सीधे इंटरस्ट रेट से है। अगर इंटरस्ट रेट भी हम बढ़ाते जाएं, इनफ्लेशन रेट कम हो रहा है, इनफ्लेशन को ध्यान में रख कर पहले इंटरस्ट रेट को बढ़ाया गया था, अब इनफ्लेशन कम हो रहा है, निश्चित तौर से अगर रेट ऑफ इंरटरस्ट कहीं कम हो रहा है - चाहे वह डोमेस्टिक सेविंग्स पर हो, बैंक की सेविंग्स पर हो या पीएफ की सेविंग पर हो, तो चिन्ता नहीं करनी चाहिए। लोग देर-सवेर मानेंगे, जिन लोगों ने इनफ्लेशन के बढ़े हुए रेट का बढ़ा हुआ इंटरस्ट लिया था. आज वे देखेंगे कि इनफ्लेशन रेट घट रहा है और आगे भी घटता रहेगा।

वित्त मंत्री जी ने जो कदम उठाए हैं, हम उनकी सराहना करते हैं। वे देश के हित के साथ चल रहे हैं, हम सब और देश की सारी जनता भी इस कदम में उनके साथ है। मैं इस फाइनेंस बिल का समर्थन करता हूं और आशा एवं उम्मीद करता हूं कि निश्चित तौर से इससे देश को लाभ होगा तथा राट्र को भी लाभ होने वाला है।

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (MAYILADUTURAI): Madam, Chairperson, in view of the fact that I had also forwarded to the hon. Finance Minister a request for the roll back of his proposals in respect of certain areas, I welcome his rolling back his proposals with respect to parts and accessories of bicycles, parts and accessories of umbrellas, his withdrawal of Excise levy on roofing tiles and his withdrawal of the service tax on matters relating to life insurance. These are all welcome steps. It should never have been proposed in the first place but I am glad that late wisdom has dawned on Shri Yashwant Sinha. In regard to the textile sector there was a very very misplaced proposal on his part to impose Excise Duty on hank yarn. Although the language in which he has

withdrawn it is somewhat complicated as he limits it to cotton waste yarn up to two counts, yet I would imagine that substantially the concerns of the hank yarn people have been met and, therefore, we welcome this.

Madam Chairperson, however, he has done nothing about the Excise Duty on cone yarn. Given the condition of the textile industry, and in particular the doldrums in which the decentralised sector finds itself, I think the Government needs to completely review once again its entire policy with regard to the cotton textile industry. The special package that he has mentioned takes a number of the present parameters for granted and does not recognise that we are (a) in a position of deep depression with regard to the cotton textile industry as a whole, whether it is the mill sector or the decentralised sector; (b) nor does it recognise that there are immense opportunities as well as challenges opening up on account of changes in the WTO regime relating to international trade in textiles. I would, therefore, urge very very strongly that in the year that is before us, that is 2002-03, the Government undertake a very comprehensive review of everything related to the cotton textile industry, both the mill sector and the decentralised sector in which these fiscal matters will constitute a part and not the whole, and place us in a position by the next Budget where we can, instead of being overwhelmed by the challenges of WTO, take advantages of the opportunities that will opened up effective from the year 2004. It is already too late but not beyond redemption. It is possible to do it now. By a very happy coincidence the Minister of Textiles is present in the House just now and even though the Minister of Finance himself is absent his able deputies are present here and perhaps between the two one can get the concentrated attention that the cotton textile sector, specifically the decentralised cotton cloth sector, deserves to receive. In this connection, I am afraid what has been proposed with regard to processed cotton fabrics in the Finance Minister’s latest statement this morning is simply not adequate. We need to have excise duty reductions which are much greater than the ones we have now in order to be able to bring this industry out of the doldrums and take it forward.

The Finance Minister has proposed nothing with regard to made-ups and garments which constitute an important element of our exports of these

items. What he has proposed with regard to processed fabrics is hedged in with so many conditions - that it is available only for certain processes like padding, damping, and flannelette raising; it is not for other processes; it only relates to hand-processed cotton fabrics, that too only for independent producers, and that too only for those using open-air stentors, etc. With all these conditions the proposal has been so hedged in that it will benefit some, it will not benefit the industry as a whole. There is a much greater need to attend to this because the entire synthetics industry has completely overtaken the cotton textiles industry.

In my intervention in the General Debate on the Budget I had pointed to the disaster that has overtaken cotton textiles sector in the 1990s compared to the growth which it had recorded in the 1980s. I would, therefore, stress in general that while the very tentative steps taken by the Union Finance Minister in this regard are to be welcomed, there is so much more to be done that I would really place a request that it be confirmed to us before the end of this debate that the hon. Finance Minister and the hon. Textiles Minister will put their heads together to come up with a package that is much more than merely a fiscal package, by the time we come to Budget 2003.

I turn, Madam, to a sector which for some reason has completely evaded the attention of the hon. Finance Minister, which is tea. The tea industry is in the doldrums. It is an industry that extends from Sontosh Mohan Deb's Assam down to Tamil Nadu. This is an industry which had moved very fast forward earlier in our economic history and is now in very very serious trouble largely on account of the domestic measures not having come up to the expectations of the international imperatives. Here I have certain specific proposals to make to the hon. Finance Minister which I hope he will be able to take into consideration before Monday, but if not, keep under review so that later on during the course of this year we might get some decent attention given to the tea industry. My suggestions are as follows.

In Section 33AB, that is the one that relates to the Tea Development Account, there is a distinction between withdrawals for revenue

expenditure and capital expenditure. But the fact is that if you look behind these two big words, you find that both the items involving revenue expenditure as well as those items involved in capital expenditure are essential for the rejuvenation of the tea industry. Thus replanting, rejuvenation pruning, infilling, and the upkeep of immature bushes which falls in the revenue account is at least as important to the revival of the tea industry as capital expenditure on extension planting, plant and machinery and labour quarters. So, please remove this completely artificial distinction between the two and allow the Tea Development Account to fully play its part in meeting the requirements of the tea industry.

Then, Madam, there is a provision in subsection (1) of Section 33AB regarding the time restriction on deposits and withdrawals from the Tea Development Account. All this relates to a previous era when tea was moving forward. We are now into an era where tea is in steep decline. Therefore, I would request the Finance Minister, in consultation with the Commerce Minister and the Agriculture Minister, to get the Tea Board or the Government of India to prepare a scheme under which there is fresh planting, and bearing in mind the long gestation period involved in fresh plants growing to maturity, to work out a scheme which removes the present onerous time restrictions on deposits and withdrawals under subsection (1) of Section 33AB.

Then, Madam, again I am still in the area of tea. If you look at section 88HC read with Rule 8(1) of the Income Tax Rules, we find that until and unless the benefits under Section 88HC are de-linked from the provisions of Rule (1) in actual practice, the tea exporters and tea producers are unable to secure the full benefits of the concessions which the hon. Finance Minister himself wishes to give this industry. And we must get a restoration of 100 per cent exemption on export income because this industry, which used to be our leading export industry, is now facing severe challenges not only in the global market from other competitors but even in the domestic market from global competitors who have been allowed to come into our economy.

In other words, the challenge is both from global exports of tea as well as SAARC imports of tea. And we need to have a completely fresh look given so that this extraordinarily important industry -- which as I said a minute earlier, extends from Tamil Nadu and Kerala all the way up to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh -- is given the kind of importance which it deserves but has not been receiving in the recent past.

There is also need, Madam, for reduction of corporate income tax rates for tea producers and exporters after fully taking into account matters that do not strictly fall within the purview of the Union Finance Minister. Take, for example, the State Agricultural Income Tax on tea producers. This is as high as 45 per cent in Assam and West Bengal and 65 per cent in Tripura. Now, obviously, our job is not to ask the State Governments to reduce their taxes but our job here, in this Parliament, is to ensure that the Central tax burden on what the State is already taking away is not so much as to kill this particular industry.

Then, there are cesses. There is a State Green Leaf Cess and there is the Central Cess Tea Act of 1953. What I would like to request is that because we in this House can do nothing about the State Green Leaf Cess, at least, we give total exemption from the Central cess that we levy under the Tea Act of 1953. For example, let us remember that 1953 was nearly 50 years ago and the boom conditions of the tea industry half a century ago are almost the direct opposite of the depressed conditions that obtain now in this industry at the turn of the century. Moreover, Madam, the Central cess is concessionary with regard to Darjeeling but not with regard to other teas and low-yielding teas grown in the Barak Valley in Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev's constituency and the adjoining areas of Tripura. There, it is unfair that the cess should be higher on them than it is in Darjeeling. Equally, for sales tax purposes, I think, tea should be treated as an essential commodity. After all, even the Finance Minister is unable to get his eyes to open without a cup of tea. It is an essential commodity. In every village, we see people sitting in tea houses drinking tea. If you treat it as an essential commodity, then you will see that the floor rate of the sales tax on tea can be fixed as it is for other essential commodities.

In regard to customs duty, there is an absolute imperative for lowering the import duty on tea bagging machines and removing the customs duty on imported filter paper. We have to have value additions and merely bagging that tea as distinct from exporting it in bulk, increases our export income so enormously that I think the Finance Minister should really put on Shri Maran's cap or both of them should put their caps on together to see to it that we become a leading exporter of bagged tea and do not remain as hewers of wood and drawers of water, exporters of just tea in bulk. In this context, I think we ought to recognise that while economic integration among SAARC countries is a desirable thing in itself, there must not be a disproportionate burden upon our tea producers, and the imports that are coming in from Nepal are a quantity that bears very little relationship to the production of tea inside Nepal. Therefore, there is need for a fresh look at the quantitative restrictions that you have on imports from Nepal. I think it should be reduced; and we also need to look at how we have been adversely affected by imports from Sri Lanka. I do not want us to stop the process of South Asian economic integration, but at the same time, I think there is need for us to be careful that it is calibrated in such a way that it benefits everybody, and does not merely benefit some countries at our own expense. Maybe the answer to it lies in looking at the PFA standards of imported tea. Let us start becoming as sophisticated as the developed countries are. This is my plea to the hon. Finance Minister. Obviously this is something he will have to do in consultation with the Ministries of External Affairs and Commerce.

I will now come to a matter which is very close to my constituency's heart – this is about gold jewellery. I trust it is very close to your heart also, Madam, in every sense of the term.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are always interested in what the women are interested!

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Unfortunately, machine-produced gold jewellery is completely displacing hand-made gold jewellery. Hand-made gold jewellery is not only superior in artistic terms and aesthetic terms, but it is also a huge employer of poor people. The machine-made gold

jewellery is being given a free run while the poor producer of hand-made gold jewellery is being subjected to all kinds of disabilities. We, therefore, suggest that machine - produced gold jewellery must have an excise duty of, at least, 16 per cent on it. If you do it, our calculations in my constituency shows that the additional revenue which Shri Yashwant Sinha can earn is of the order of Rs.2,500 crore a year, exactly equal to the expenditure on the *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.* He can impose excise duty on machine-made gold jewellery, collect that money of Rs.2,500 crore from them and allow the hand-made gold jewellers an opportunity to continue to have their survival.

SHRI TRILOCHAN KANUNGO (JAGATSINGHPUR): How can you distinguish between the two?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : You can distinguish at the level of the unit which is manufacturing it and the place at which it is being done. It is quite clear that in Mayiladuturai, there is no machine-made gold jewellery, whereas it is completely there in Surat or in Mumbai. There are such units in such places. There are, I am sure, ways of distinguishing them. What is important for the Finance Minister is to concentrate on this point. I am sure that he has the wit and wisdom to come up with the right answers. He can add to this heavy import duties on imported gold jewellery and imported finished diamonds. Along with this, if he were to supervise and regulate gold stocks, he could ensure that there is no cornering of the market which is currently taking place with respect to the basics.

There is an extraordinary proposal that has been made by the Finance Minister with a view to promoting the use of gasohol in this country. It is an extraordinary proposal. What he has done is this. He has one surcharge on petrol and another surcharge on petrol that is doped with ethanol. The difference between the two is about 75 paise a litre.

Madam, the way you are looking at me – extremely sharply – I presume that I have to reduce the time that I have to take.

The consequences of the Finance Minister having a discrimination in the surcharge on petrol vis-à-vis the surcharge on petrol doped with ethanol is to the benefit of the distillers to the extent of Rs.750 crore a year. I have all the details with me. I will be sending them in any case to the Finance Minister. I cannot believe that a noble man, the noblest Roman of them all, Shri Yashwant Sinha

actually wants to make booze producers have a great advantage at the expense of the chemical industries which are based upon alcohol. The chemical industries based on alcohol are producing something like Rs.3,000 crore of output every year, employing more than 15,000 persons and are involved in key industries such as drugs and pharmaceuticals, textiles, dyes, tyre cord, adhesives, and even bangles. Somehow what he has done is this. The distillers are going to get a great advantage. I think, they slipped one over the government because I know that the distillers spend all their time wandering from one political party to another, asking as to whether we need their support. So, somebody has slipped this trick in; I cannot believe that Shri Yashwant Sinha really wanted this to happen. I urge him to please look into this very very carefully.

There are several other things to say. Madam, if you permit me, I will mention one or two very quickly.

15.00 hrs.

One is the disabled. Back in 1995, under section 41 of the Disabilities Act, we made a promise that incentives would be given to any employer whose work force included more than five per cent disabled persons. Although this was notified in 1995, seven years later nobody has spelt out what these incentives are and so nobody is being given any incentive. I think we owe it to our disabled people, particularly since Parliament passed this Act seven years ago, that within the next few days we get a notification from the Finance Ministry which tells us what are the incentives for employing people who are disabled. We also need the Finance Minister to focus on increasing the income tax exemption limit for incomes of disabled people. It was fixed at Rs.40,000 in 1996. Six years later, I think it is only just that

it should be increased to at least Rs.1 lakh because the salaries of all the attendants that a disabled person is to engage have gone up at least twice since 1996. They need these attendants not because they wish to live in style but simply because their disability makes it necessary that they have such attendants dealing with them.

Finally, there was a *dharna* outside the Finance Minister's house by the Disabled Rights Group in early March, in order to bring to his attention that while he has no customs duty on computer chips, he is imposing heavy customs duties on what are called the assistive devices like wheel chairs, Braillers, hearing aids, etc. At that time the Finance Minister apparently told the demonstrators that they were wrong and that they could import these duty free. But now it has become clear that it is only a disabled person returning himself or herself from abroad who can bring these assistive devices free of duty. It cannot be imported in this country, not even by NGOs, not even for free distribution. Since I am sure the Home Minister, sorry the Finance Minister's heart – I made a mistake in suggesting the Home Minister has a heart, I have my doubts about that existence -but the Finance Minister's heart is in the right place is with the disabled people. I would be very grateful if he could kindly give customs duty exemption for these asssistive devices which they are in need of.

With regard to one or two other matters, since obviously you are not going to give me any more time, I am not going to make them. May I request the Finance Minister to give me the permission to write to him about matters relating to the charitable institutions?

With regard to the indexing of the memorandum that he provides explaining the Finance Bill and making explanations more transparent, because there is a classic example with which I wish to end. If he looks at page 16 of his Memorandum explaining the Finance Bill, he will find that in order to explain what he proposes to do on section 10(29), he says: "It is proposed that the exemption be withdrawn". His explanation for proposing to withdraw it is that it is proposed that the exemption be withdrawn. How can this be an explanation? I am aware of the fact that the Finance Minister does not actually write every word of the memorandum but perhaps there

is some officer in his Ministry whose ear requires tweaking. It is essential that you index number your memorandum so that it can be easily read. This kind of a bogus explanation should not be permitted to get into the memorandum. With these words I thank you, Madam, for your indulgence.

श्री चिन्मयानन्द स्वामी (जौनपुर) : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपका आभारी हूं कि आपने मुझे वित्त विधेयक पर बोलने के लिए आमंत्रित किया। हम अपने मित्रों को सुन रहे थे। जिन परिस्थितियों में यह बजट आया, उन परिस्थितियों की चिंता प्राय: सभी मित्रों ने की है। खास तौर से कांग्रेस के जो वरिठ मित्र बोल रहे थे, उन्होंने परिस्थितियों की गंभीरता को महसूस करते हुए अपने विचार व्यक्त किये। आर्थिक सुधारों का दौर 1991 से शुरु हुआ। अनेक कठिनाइयां थीं और उन कठिनाइयों में देश की जो आर्थिक स्थिति निर्मित हुई, भारतीय जनता पार्टी के नेतृत्व और एन.डी.ए. की सरकार को विरासत में जो कुछ मिला, उन कठिनाइयों से निकलने का रास्ता किसी भी वित्त मंत्री की मजबूरी हो सकती है। माननीय सिन्हा साहब की भी मजबूरी थी। उस मजबूरी में भी सर्वाधिक ध्यान गांव की ओर दिया गया और गांवों को पहली बार आर्थिक सुधार के लक्ष्य के रूप में स्वीकार किया गया। मैं समझता हूँ कि यह महात्मा गांधी के उन सपनों को साकार करने का अवसर देना था जिसकी प्रतीक्षा पिछले कई वर्षों से यह देश कर रहा था। हमारी योजनाएं जो भी बनती थीं, उन सब आर्थिक योजनाओं में हम केवल आंकड़ों पर चर्चा करते थे और आंकड़ों के आधार पर ही नए आंकड़े खड़े किया करते थे, लेकिन गांवों की उन ज़रूरतों को महसूस नहीं कर पाए जिनके बिना गांव और शहर के बीच की खाई बढ़ती रही। नतीजा यह हुआ कि मानव संसाधन की दृटि से हम काफी पीछे चले गए। विश्व में हमारा स्थान कहां पहुँच गया, यह कहना कठिन है, क्योंकि सारी व्यवस्थाएं और योजनाएं कुछ मुट्ठी भर लोगों को नज़र में रखकर निर्मित होती थीं। करोड़ों लोग जो गांवों में बसते थे, उनके पीने के पानी की चिन्ता, आने जाने के लिए रास्तों की चिन्ता, रोशनी के लिए बिजली की चिन्ता, खेतों में पानी पहुँचे इसकी चिन्ता, उनकी उत्पादकता बढ़े इसकी चिन्ता और उनके उत्पाद की अच्छी कीमत मिले इसकी चिन्ता बहुत कम की जाती थी, शायद नहीं के बराबर की जाती थी। यह अवसर देश को देखने को मिला कि आज गांव की ओर यह देश और देश की व्यवस्था मजबूती से बढ़ रही है। अभी पिछले महीने ही हम लोग आंध्र प्रदेश के जनपद गुंटूर के एक गांव में गए थे और उस समय हमारे ग्रामीण विकास मंत्री महोदय भी साथ में थे। हम ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय की सलाहकार समिति के साथ गए थे। जिस प्रकार हम यहां अपने मित्रों को सुन रहे हैं, खास तौर से प्रतिपक्षी मित्रों को, उसी तरह से हमने आम बजट को लेकर वहां के आम व्यक्ति को सुना। वह प्रतिक्रिया मैंने गांव में देखी।

महोदय, मैं आपके संज्ञान में लाना चाहता हूँ कि स्व-सहायता समूह एक क्रांतिकारी योजना है। मैं समझता हूँ कि आज तक आर्थिक दृटि से बैंकिंग की जितनी भी प्रणालियां शुरू की गईं, वित्त व्य वस्था बनाई गई, उसमें सैल्फ हैल्प ग्रुप एक क्रांतिकारी कदम है और उसको प्रभावी ढंग से लागू

करना एक नई सोच थी। महिलाओं में आत्मविश्वास पैदा करने की दृटि से, उनको आत्मनिर्भर बनाने की दृटि से, उनको सामाजिक दायित्वों के प्रति जागरूक करने की दृटि से, उन्हें आर्थिक सुधार की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने के लिए इस क्रांतिकारी कदम को सराहा गया होता, या एक भी प्र ातिपक्षी मित्र द्वारा ऐसा कहा जाता तो मैं समझता कि उन्होंने गांव की चिन्ता की है लेकिन उन्होंने ऐसा नहीं किया।

दूसरी बात यह है कि शहर से शहर जुड़े, गांवों से शहर जुड़े, एक शहर से दूसरे शहर तक जाने के रास्ते खुलें, यह अच्छी बात है लेकिन मैं जिस क्षेत्र से चुनकर आता हूँ, उस क्षेत्र में आज की तारीख में 357 गांव ऐसे हैं जहां जाने के लिए कच्चा पक्का कोई रास्ता नहीं है। यह स्थिति एक कांस्टीट्यूएंसी की नहीं है, यह स्थिति पूरे देश की है और जब लोगों को चलने का ही रास्ता नहीं होगा तो वह प्रगति कैसे करेंगे और गांव प्रगति नहीं करेंगे तो देश प्रगति करेगा, यह कहना कठिन और गलत भी होगा।

महोदय, गांवों की चिन्ता श्री मणिशंकर जी कर रहे थे, वह बड़ी अच्छी बात कर रहे थे और उनके ध्यान में प्रधान मंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना के लाभ की बात थी। मैं उनको इसके लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। प्रधान मंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना प्रभावी ढंग से लागू हो, इसके लिए राज्यों को बेहतर होना होगा। मैं समझता हूँ कि जिस तरह से भारत सरकार ने गांवों को सड़कों से जोड़ने के लिए, विकास से जोड़ने के लिए प्रधान मंत्री ग्रामीण सड़क योजना शुरू की है, इसके जैसा सुधार कार्यक्रम इसके पहले कभी नज़र नहीं आया। इसे प्रभावी बनाने की दृटि से जो काम किया जा रहा है, मैं समझता हूँ कि राज्यों को इसमें वह सहयोग देना चाहिए, जिस की अपेक्षा केन्द्र उनसे कर रहा है। फिर केवल गांवों की बात नहीं है। देश में उत्तर से लेकर दक्षिण तक जो स्वर्ण जयन्ती चतुर्भुज योजना बनाई गई है, और जो अगले कुछ वर्षों में पूरी होने जा रही है। उसके पूरा होने के बाद हम अंतर्राट्रीय स्तर पर महसूस कर सकेंगे कि हम भी एक लोकतांत्रिक देश हैं। पहले जब हम देश के बाहर जाते थे और वहां के एक्सप्रैस-वे देखते थे तो भारत में वह हमारे लिए सपना सा नज़र आता था कि क्या भारत में भी ऐसा हो सकता है। लेकिन हमें प्रधान मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहिए, वित्त मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहिए कि इस कठिन परिस्थिति में भी एक महत्वाकांक्षी योजना की शुरूआत की गई है और कश्मीर से कन्या कुमारी को तथा गुवाहाटी को गुजरात से जोड़ने के लिए एक बहुत बड़ा कदम उठाया गया है, जिस का लाभ लोगों को रोजगार के रूप में भी मिल रहा है।

महोदय, मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि जो लोग आज रोजगार नहीं मिलने की बात कह रहे हैं, वह ठीक नहीं है। मैं समझता हूं कि रोजगार का मतलब सिर्फ सरकारी नौकरी ही नहीं है। यदि सिर्फ सरकारी नौकरी को ही रोजगार समझा जाएगा, तो मैं नहीं समझता कि हम इस देश में कर्ज से मुक्ति का रास्ता निकाल पाएंगे और उसे आत्मनिर्भर बना पाएंगे। जब तक हम रोजगार के अवसर को सार्वजनिक जीवन में नहीं ले जाएंगे, जब तक हम रोजगार के अवसर को व्यक्तिगत जीवन में

अर्थात् निजी क्षेत्र में नहीं ले जाएंगे, तब तक हम आत्मनिर्भरता की भावना अपने देश और जनता में पैदा नहीं कर सकते हैं। आज लाखों मजदूर इन नई सड़कों पर काम कर रहे हैं रोजी कमा रहे हैं और वे अपनी जीविका चला रहे हैं।

महोदय, इसके साथ-साथ ग्रामीण विद्युतीकरण का सवाल है। ऊर्जा की देश में उपलब्धता आज भी एक चुनौती है, एक चेलेंज है। हम ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र में विदेशी निवेश या स्वदेशी निवेश की अपेक्षा कर रहे हैं और ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने की दृटि से प्रयत्नशील हैं क्योंकि हमें जितनी ऊर्जा मिलनी चाहिए उतना उत्पादन नहीं हो पा रहा है। ऐसी स्थिति में भी गांव-गांव में बिजली पहुंचाने, रोशनी पहुंचाने का संकल्प इस बजट में दिखाई देता है। यह एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि है और महत्वाकांक्षी संदेश है।

महोदय, वित्त मंत्री जी ने अपने बजट भााण में कहा था और वह संदेश गांव तक गया है। आज तक पी.डी.एस. के माध्यम से अनाज का जो वितरण होता रहा है, उसमें एक बड़ी विचित्र बात यह है कि पहले हम अनाज खरीदते हैं फिर उसे केन्द्रीय मुख्यालय पर भेजते हैं, उसे जिला मुख्यालय पर भेजते हैं या प्रान्त के मुख्यालय पर भेजते हैं उसके बाद भंडार से पी.डी.एस. में ि वतरण हेतु वहीं भेजते हैं जहां से उसे खरीदा जाता है। ऐसा करने में व्यर्थ में सरकार को भाड़ा पड़ता है, अन्न की जो दुर्दशा होती है वह अलग। इस स्थिति के कारण हालत यह हो गई कि जब पिछली दफा राज्यों को गेहूं और चावल निशुल्क दिया गया, तो कई राज्यों ने वह माल इसलिए नहीं उठाया क्योंकि उनके पास अनाज ढोने हेतु देने के लिए भाड़ा नहीं था। इसलिए इस बार गां वों में पंचायतों को यह अधिकार दिया है कि वे गांवों में अन्न-बैंक बनाएं। उन अन्न बैंकों से किसान अन्न उधार ले और जैसे ही उसकी पैदावार आ जाए वह अपना उधार चुकता कर दे। इससे जहां अन्न उत्पादित होता है, वह वहीं रहेगा। उसकी दुर्दशा नहीं होगी और जो अन्न उत्पादक किसान हैं उन्हें जरूरत के समय अन्न गांव में ही उपलब्ध हो सकेगा। आज स्थिति यह है कि जब फसल आती है, तो अन्न की कीमत कुछ होती है और जब बाजार में अभाव उत्पन्न होता है, तो उसी अन्न की कई गुनी कीमत देकर किसान को खरीदना पड़ता है क्योंकि किसान को उसके द्वारा उत्पादित अन्न के भंडारण की सुविधा उपलब्ध नहीं होने के कारण उसे पहले बेचना पड़ता है और फिर खरीदना पड़ता है। इस सरकार ने ग्रामों में अन्न बैंक बनाने का जो कदम उठाया है, उससे ग्रामों के जो सामान्य आदमी हैं, उन्हे लाभ होगा। आज यह बात ग्रामों के लोग महसूस करते हैं।

महोदय, जिस प्रकार से गांवों में अन्न बैंक बनाने की शुरूआत हो गई है, इसको थोड़ा और बढ़ाया जाए और गांवों में जो फल व सब्जियों का उत्पादन हो रहा है, जिनके ट्रांसपोर्टेशन की कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है, यदि उनके गांव में ही भंडारण की व्यवस्था हो जाए, उनके ट्रांसपोर्टेशन की व्यवस्था हो जाए और अन्न बैंक की ही तरह फल और सब्जी बैंकों की स्थापना ग्राम पंचायत स्तर पर अथवा ब्लॉक स्तर पर कर दी जाए, तो फल और सब्जी उत्पादकों को, जो छोटी कास्त के

होते हैं और कम उपज करने वाले होते हैं, वे अपनी छोटी कास्त में भी अच्छा उत्पादन कर सकेंगे और अपनी जीविका चला सकेंगे।

मैं समझता हूं कि जब अन्न बैंक की स्थापना की शुरूआत हुई है, तो फल और सब्जियों के भंडारण एवं ट्रांसपोर्टेशन की सुविधा भी धीरे-धीरे उपलब्ध हो जाएगी। आगे चलकर हम इसी प्रकार इस काम के लिए निजी क्षेत्र को भी हर प्रकार की छूट देकर प्रोत्साहित कर सकते हैं और ऐसा कर के हम फल व सब्जियों का भंडारण कर सकते हैं।

महोदय, श्री मणि शंकर जी सही बोल रहे थे, मैं उन्हें धन्यवाद देता हूं। उन्होंने अपने भााण में दो-तीन बातें काफी अच्छी कही थीं। चाय के संबंध में उन्होंने जो कुछ कहा, मैं उसका स्वागत करता हूं। चाय के निर्यात से धन का लाभ होता है। चाय का निर्यात हमारी दृटि से होना चाहिए, लेकिन यह क्षेत्र हिंसा से प्रभावित क्षेत्र है। जहां चाय होती है वहां के मजदूर हिंसा से प्रभावित हैं। वह सारा क्षेत्र हिंसा प्रभावित क्षेत्र रहा है। वहां के मजदूर ऐसे क्षेत्र से होते हैं जहां यदि चाय का काम नहीं हो, तो उनकी जीविका नहीं चल सकती। इसलिए चाय की गुणवत्ता सुधारने और निर्यात को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी कदम उठाएं।

महोदय, स्वर्ण आभूाण बनाने वालों की बात कही गई है। जो सुनार होते हैं, चान्दी और सोने का काम करने वाले लोग होते हैं, वे गरीब लोग होते हैं और ऐसा काम करने वाले लोग होते हैं कि उन्हें संरक्षण की आवश्यकता है।

हम जानते हैं कि भारत के कालीन का व्यापार विदेशों में बहुत अच्छा था लेकिन उसके पीछे चाइल्ड लेबर इन्वाल्व है, की बात कहकर विदेशों में हमारे कालीन को लेने से इंकार कर दिया गया। नतीजा यह हुआ कि कालीन के निर्यात पर हमें बहुत नुकसान हुआ। जबकि आज भी भारत का जो कालीन हाथ से बना हुआ है, उसकी तुलना विश्व में किसी से नहीं की जा सकती। हमें उसका अच्छा बाजार मिल सकता है लेकिन उसकी मार्केटिंग के लिए हमें विदेशों में यह वाता वरण बनाएं कि इसमें जो छोटे बच्चे इन्वाल्व हैं, उनका शोाण न करके बल्कि उनकी पढ़ाई-लिखाई, रोजगार, रख-रखाव और उनके पोाण का उचित प्रबंध किया जाता है। यह विश्वास अगर उन लोगों को दिया जाये तो निश्चय ही हमारा कालीन व्यापार बढ़ेगा। इसी तरह से जो हस्त उद्योग हैं, चाहे कालीन हों, स्वर्णाभूाण हों या कांच की चूड़ी हों, इन सबमें जो श्रम का निवेश होता है, उस श्रम को सही आदर, सही मूल्य और सही संरक्षण शासन से मिलेगा तो इसका लाभ देश को न केवल आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता प्राप्त करने और बेरोजगारी दूर करने में होगा बल्कि उससे हम विदेशी मुद्रा भी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

सभापति जी, वित्त मंत्री जी कोटिशः धन्यवाद के पात्र हैं। आज हमारे खजाने में जितनी विदेशी मुद्रा, यू.एस. डालर है, भारत के इतिहास में इससे पहले उतनी कभी नहीं रही। इसके लिए इनका

अभिनंदन होना चाहिए। इसी तरह अनाज के गोदामों में आज जितना अनाज है, उतना कभी नहीं रहा। धन दो प्रकार के होते हैं--एक सोने के रूप में दिखाई पड़ता है--कनक-कनक ते सौगुनी। ये दोनों कनक होते हैं या तो वह सोना कनक है या खेत में पैदा होने वाला गेहूं कनक है। दोनों कनक हमारे पास काफी हैं। यह रिकार्ड है कि इससे पहले इतना भंडार कभी नहीं रहा। यह सब कैसे हुआ--एक नीति के तहत हुआ। हम जानते हैं कि इसी देश में 1991 में कहा गया था कि अगर हमारी सरकार आयेगी तो हम सौ दिन में महंगाई पर नियंत्रण प्राप्त कर लेंगे लेकिन 1996 में, इन पांच साल में महंगाई सौ गुना बढ़ गई। वह महंगाई सौ दिन में कम नहीं हुई। आज इस सरकार के चार सालों में महंगाई किस क्षेत्र में हुई है--जहां भी हुई है, उस पर नियंत्रण पाने का प्र ायास किया जा रहा है।

महंगाई अब सरकार की ओर से बढ़ानी पड़ रही है। गेहूं का दाम हमें अपनी ओर से बढ़ाकर तय करना पड़ रहा है। चावल का दाम हमें अपनी ओर से बढ़ाकर तय करना पड़ रहा है। प्याज के बल पर बहुत से लोग सत्ता में आ गये लेकिन आज प्याज का भाव भी बढ़ नहीं पा रहा है। प्याज की उत्पादकता चाहे जैसी हो लेकिन बाजार में प्याज की दर पर हम नियंत्रण प्राप्त कर रहे हैं। सामान्य जीवन को जीने के लिए जो महंगाई का सवाल पैदा हुआ करता था, वह आज मुझे किसी के भााण में सुनने को नहीं मिलता है। किसी के घोाणा पत्र में महंगाई अब राजनीतिक समस्या नहीं रह गयी, जिस समस्या का असर सामान्य आदमी के जीवन पर पड़ता है।

अभी हमारे एक साम्यवादी नेता कह रहे थे कि प्रवासियों को छूट दी गयी है। हम जानते हैं कि जब हमारे ऊपर संकट पड़ा, जब परमाणु परीक्षण हुआ और देश पर आर्थिक संकट आया तब हम पर सब तरह के प्रतिबंध लागू हुए थे। उन सैंक्शन्स में हमारी दिक्कत यह थी कि हम अपनी अर्थव्यवस्था कैसे कायम रखें। एक इंसर्जेंट बांड ऑफ इंडिया जारी किया गया, तब वह प्रवासियों का ही धन था, जिससे 4 अरब 34 करोड़ रुपये जो आपके खजाने में आकर भर गये, जिससे यह देश आर्थिक दृटि से आत्मनिर्भर ही नहीं बना बल्कि भारत का स्वाभिमान जागा, वह प्रवासियों का ही धन था। मैं निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि इस सुधार के क्रम में कुछ छूट हो सकती है, कुछ गलतियां हो सकती हैं।

मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूं कि आज गांव का ध्यान कितना रखा गया है ? आज गांव-गांव को टेलीफोन की सुविधा दी गई है। जब मैं 1998 में मछलीशहर से चुनाव लडने के लिए गया तब टेलीफोन में डायल-टोन नहीं हुआ करती थी। उस समय परमात्मा का मिलना आसान था लेकिन डायल-टोन का मिलना मुश्किल था। हमको टेलीफोन के सौ-सौ कनेक्शन दिये जाते थे और कहा जाता था कि इसको आप अपने निर्वाचन क्षेत्र में किसी को भी दे सकते हैं। हम गांव के लोगों से कहते थे कि ये कनेक्शन ले लो तो वे कहते थे कि हम इसका क्या करें, हमें इससे कोई मतलब नहीं है। हमें टेलीफोन नहीं चाहिए। आज उसी गांव के लोग टेलीफोन की जरूरत महसूस कर रहे हैं। आज टेलीफोन गांव-गांव में पहुंच रहा है।

अभी पोस्ट कार्ड की बात कही गयी, पोस्ट कार्ड के टिकट की बात कही गयी। मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि वह साधारण पोस्ट कार्ड की बात न होकर प्रिंटेड पोस्ट कार्ड की बात कही गयी है। श्री प वन जी ने स्वयं ही कह दिया कि वह आपके पोस्ट कार्ड को इस्तेमाल नहीं करना चाहते। वे खुद ही छपवाते हैं। आजकल हमारे पास बहुत सारे कार्ड आ रहे हैं जिनमें शादी के भी कार्ड हैं और न व र्वा के भी कार्ड हैं। हम बाजार में एक कार्ड की कीमत पता करने गये तो पता चला कि वह 25 रुपये का कार्ड है।

अगर लोग बाजार से 25 रुपये का कार्ड पब्लिशर को फायदा पहुंचाने के लिए खरीद सकते हैं तो यदि उस पर 6-8 रुपये का टिकट लगा दें तो कोई गुनाह नहीं है। इससे राट्र मजबूत होता है, देश मजबूत होता है, देश की अर्थव्यवस्था सुधरती है, कर्जा उतरता है। हम व्यापारिक और अपने संबंधियों को कार्ड के माध्यम से जिस तरह संदेश पहुंचाते हैं, उस पर खर्च करते हैं लेकिन जो सरकार के खाते में धन जा रहा होता है, उस पर ऐतराज करते हैं। यह नहीं होना चाहिए। आज टेलीफोन सस्ता हो गया है इसलिए लोग टेलीफोन से बात कर लेते हैं, कार्ड से कौन काम चलाता है। मैं निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि गांव-गांव में टेलीफोन पहुंचने से सूचना के क्षेत्र में एक क्रान्ति आई है और इस क्रान्ति को व्यवहारिक बनाने के लिए, गांव-गांव तक पहुंचाने के लिए जो भी इम्पोर्ट किया जाता है, अगर उस पर कर कम किए जाते हैं तो अपने देश की सूचना प्र ाद्योगिकी सुधार की दिशा में एक अच्छा कदम है, इसकी आलोचना करने का कोई कारण नहीं है।

कृ ाि नीति इसी कार्यकाल में बनी। आज हमें कृ ाि नीति का स्वागत करना चाहिए कि तमाम कृ ाि उत्पादों पर टैक्स की कमी हो गई है, टैक्स घट गए हैं, कृ ाि यंत्रों की कीमतों में कमी लाने के लिए टैक्सों को कम किया गया है जिससे कृ ाि को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। शुगर के मामले में सरकार ने जो दृटिकोण अपनाया है, उससे चीनी उद्योग न केवल पनपा है। हम उत्तर प्रदेश की बात करते हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश में अगर किसान 1992 में गन्ना बेचता था तो उसे 1996 में भुगतान मिलता था, वह चार र्वा तक प्रतीक्षा करता था। आज महीनों, दिनों की प्रतीक्षा नहीं करनी पड़ती केवल हफ्ते में भुगतान मिल जाता है। यह केवल गन्ना, चीनी के संबंध में अपनाई गई उदार नीति के कारण है।

एक अंतिम बात जरूर कहना चाहूंगा, वित्त मंत्री जी इधर ध्यान देंगे। आज रिलीजियस ट्रस्ट आदि के साथ दिक्कत खड़ी हो गई है। यह सब जमा पूंजी के ब्याज से चलते थे। कभी-कभी ऐसा होता है कि जिस व्यक्ति का कोई उत्तराधिकारी नहीं होता, वह अपने जीवनकाल में जितनी सम्पत्ति अर्जित करता है, उसे ट्रस्ट में इन्वैस्ट करके विल कर देता है कि यह ट्रस्ट बना दिया है, इसकी जमा पूंजी है इसके ब्याज से ये कल्याणकारी काम चलेंगे, चाहे स्कूल, अस्पताल, सार्वजनिक सेवा का काम हो, छोटे बच्चों, डिसएबल्ड का काम हो, सबकी सेवा के काम होते हैं। जैसे-जैसे बैंकों की ब्याज की दर घटती जा रही है, उनके बजट पर इसका सीधा प्रभाव पड़ रहा है। इससे सेवा

के काम कम होते जा रहे हैं, खत्म होते जा रहे हैं, यहां तक कि तमाम धार्मिक संस्थाएं प्रभावित हैं। अभी राम कृण मिशन के लोग मुझे मिले थे । उन्होंने कहा कि हमारी जमा पूंजी पर मिलने वाला ब्याज कम हो गया है इसलिए हमें सेवा कार्य में संकोच करना पड़ रहा है, उसे कम करना पड़ रहा है। इसी तरह शिक्षा संस्थाएं हैं। मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि इसका कोई रास्ता निकाला जाना चाहिए कि उनके जो सेवा कार्य चल रहे हैं, वे यथावत चलते रहें, धार्मिक कार्य यथावत चलते रहें, उन पर कोई वित्तीय दिक्कत न आए, उनके सामने वित्तीय चुनौती न खड़ी हो।

15. 24 बजे (डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह पीठासीन हुए)

मैं दो दिन पहले यूरोप गया था। यूरोप के मित्रों ने बड़ी अच्छी बात कही। भारत के वहां तमाम लोग रहते हैं। जिस गुजरात की हम बात करते हैं, गुजरात के लोग भी वहां थे। सुरक्षा पर जो पांच प्रतिशत अधिभार है, उसकी चर्चा किसी ने शुरू कर दी थी कि सुरक्षा पर पांच प्रतिशत अधिभार लगाया गया है, एक व्यक्ति ने आपत्ति जताई तो दस लोगों ने कहा कि राट्र की रक्षा के लिए आपति क्यों ? क्या यह देश भामा शाह का देश नहीं है, लोग जीवन बलिदान कर सकते हैं लेकिन राट्र की रक्षा के लिए अपनी आमदनी से अगर पांच प्रतिशत अधिभार स्वीकार नहीं कर सकते तो उनकी राट्र भक्ति पर सवाल खड़ा होता है। मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि इसे अधिभार नहीं मानना चाहिए बल्कि यह सरकार को दिया गया एक उपहार है। यह एक अवसर है, इसे अवसर के रूप में इस्तेमाल किया जाना चाहिए। राट्र संकट की इस घड़ी में राट्र की रक्षा के लिए अगर हमारा सब कुछ न्योछावर हो तो भी करना चाहिए। पांच प्रतिशत अधिभार कोई ज्यादा नहीं होता, उसे सर्हा स्वीकार किया जाना चाहिए। उसकी आलोचना नहीं होनी चाहिए।

इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं वित्त मंत्री जी के इस कठिन परिस्थिति में, आर्थिक चुनौती में, जहां उनको जितना रिवैन्यू मिलता है, उसका आधा सिर्फ कर्जे का ब्याज चुकाना पड़ता है, इस परिस्थिति में जहां सीमा पर संकट है, सीमा पार से चुनौती मिल रही है, इन सारी परिस्थितियों में जिस प्रकार बजट और आर्थिक व्यवस्था वित्त मंत्री जी ने दी है, उससे हम राट्र की चुनौती का सामना कर सकेंगे।

उसमें इच्छाशक्ति दिखाई पड़ती है। हम अपने खर्चे को कम करें और अपनी उत्पादकता को बढ़ाएं। सरकार पर निर्भरता कम करें और अपनी आत्मनिर्भर्ता बढ़ाएं। यह किसी भी देश के लिए और उसके नागरिक के लिए गर्व की चीज हो सकती है।

केन्द्र की योजनाओं को राज्य सरकारें बेहतर ढंग से समझें और उसे कार्यान्वित करने के लिए प्र यास करें। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूं कि केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा एक प्रदेश को सूखा राहत के लिए पैसा दिया गया। उस पैसे से उस राज्य सरकार ने हवाईअड्डा बनाया, तो आप समझ सकते हैं कि अगर ऐसे काम होगा तो कैसे लोगों को राहत मिलेगी। इसलिए राज्य सरकारों को भी यह

जिम्मेदारी महसूस की जानी चाहिए। जो संकट देश के सामने है, उसे राज्यों को भी देखना चाहिए और महसूस करना चाहिए और इस आर्थिक संकट के समाधान में सभी लोगों को सहयोग करना चाहिए।

इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं और वित्त मंत्री जी को बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देता हूं।

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to say that I feel very happy that the burden of my speaking has been brought down to a great extent. It is so because of the relief that has been given by the hon. Finance Minister in respect of the various demands made by the hon. Members of Parliament and other organisations. It is only possible when there is a sportsmanlike Finance Minister, and it is not possible when there is anybody else. I must say this. Mr. Finance Minister, you need not feel sorry when people say that you are a roll-back Minister. Only one who rises to the occasion for the country's need can roll-back things and not others. You have not made it a prestige issue. What you have done, you have done for the cause of the country. I heartily congratulate you for that.

My good friend Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar has raised certain points. You have heard them. I will not repeat them. I would like to say that I was born and brought up in a district where there are 110 tea gardens. Our basic industry is tea. Whether it is anything, even our institutions and other things are helped by the tea industry. The tea industry people patronise the local people's cause. For anything, at any time, they come forward to help people. But the important point is that this industry is in a very serious condition. More than 15 to 20 tea gardens have been closed down. There is a huge backlog of excise duty, sales tax, cess and other things. However, they are maintaining it and paying the labourers. The bank is also reluctant to help them. However, with our intervention, the bank has come forward to help this industry, of course, with certain conditions.

Why are we asking for this industry to be helped? The reason is that it is a labour-intensive industry – whether directly or indirectly. At least four million people are working in this industry in States like Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, and in Tamil Nadu, especially in the Nilgiris they are working. Next, it is providing indirect employment to about ten million people, who are working in this industry. This is not my figure. This is the figure of the Tea Board. It is also interesting to note that it is the only industry in which 50 per cent of the workers working in it are women. Ladies work in this industry. Nowhere else do they work to this extent. In other industries, the percentage of women workers is a maximum of 15. But here it is 50 per cent. Then, in terms of revenue generation, it is good that the tea industry earns a very good foreign exchange to our Government. At the peak of the time, it earns about Rs.2000 crore. Now, this industry is facing a challenge from Kenya and Sri Lanka as far as tea is concerned. They are making distress sale in the international market. Even, in our internal market also, they are doing this. Their Governments are giving them various benefits. It is very difficult for our Government to give such benefits to this industry here. At the same time, I do not ask you to give those benefits. But I would like to say that the present situation in the tea industry is very much serious that it needs some helping hand from the Government. If you remember, during the Janata Government's time, it imposed an excise duty of rupees five extra and the industry was in great difficulties.

The Government again withdrew that in 1980.

With regard to the withdrawal of Clause 17 of the Tea (Marketing) Control Order, I would like to say that the entire auction has to be done in the Auction Market at Guwahati. This is not your cup of tea. This has to be looked after by the Commerce Ministry. I would also urge the Government to see that unless and until it looks into this problem very favourably, it would create labour unrest. If labour unrest is created, the provident fund and other things cannot be given. You know that this industry gives rice and paddy at a subsidised rate, which is less than what fair price shops sell rice and paddy, to the workers. This benefit was given at the instance of the Central Government. The Government has to look after the interests of the

labourers. Concerted efforts should be launched and financial support should be extended to the industry and to the Tea Board. I would skip the details because Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar has also mentioned this and about the different Acts, which needs to be changed. I do not want to say more on this.

I want to mention a few things of my area, Barak Valley – we have to pay high transportation cost of input materials and finished goods through a terrain, which is quite often inaccessible due to inclement weather – Silchar-Shillong-Guwahati Road. There is neither regular train service nor any water transport. Traditionally, Cachar has always had differential excise levy as it was in Zone 1 of the Excise Schedule. Recently, however, a standard rate of excise is payable on all manufactured tea, regardless of the location. Due to the above mentioned reasons, the net effect has been an escalation or higher input costs and lower productivity. This is creating an unhealthy situation whereby the cost of production is on the higher side compared to other regions. As an immediate relief, I would earnestly urge upon the hon. Minister to waive the excise duty in totality or for a temporary period. I do not want to say to him to take it away for all time to come. The impact of such waiver on the Government Treasury would be minimal compared to the relief it would provide to the industry, which is the lifeline of millions of people. This is an industry which not only gives employment to millions but also fulfils various social obligations such as supplying rations of rice and *atta* at 75 paise a kg. even today, free medical aid, free protective clothing, free firewood and many such other facilities.

Sir, I would also like to take the liberty of mentioning here that between the years 1999 and 2002, the prices, on an average, have fallen by about Rs.25 per kg., while the average cost of production has gone up by about Rs.12 per kg. to Rs.60 in Barak Valley. The average price realisation in sale is Sterling 8 of the Guwahati Auction was Rs.37.60 per kg. The net impact of this development works to about a loss of Rs.23 per kg., which I am sure, the hon. Minister would appreciate, cannot be sustained by any industry. I have had the occasion to address your goodself on these developments in the past. Even in the last Budget, I had raised these points. The situation in the Brahmaputra Valley is no better. I would urge upon the

hon. Minister look into this matter very seriously. I have told you that you always look at the various problems. Of course, your kitty is limited. You also have the difficulties. You are not a magician. You cannot levy tax but you have to give relief. Kindly see in between as to what you can do. I do not know. But, what you do for other things, do the same for us also. This is the only request I could make.

I would like to inform you, which I told you during the lunch hour, that first of all, the present economic condition of the North-Eastern Region is very bad.

We are very sorry that in the recent Budget proposals income tax benefits which were available for setting up of new industry in North East are not extended. As I explained earlier, it was there, it was supposed to be extended, but it has not been extended. The time limit of income tax benefits for new industry in North East has thus expired on 31.3.2002, under Section 80 I B of the Income Tax Act.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): I have extended it today.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Yes; you have extended it, but I owe an apology that some of the business houses have misused this benefit. But the Chief Ministers of all the North Eastern States, in their recent meeting in Guwahati, have condemned those big business houses who go there and try to utilise this benefit. Instead of generating employment and business, they try to siphon away the money and thereby deprive the Government of India and defeat the intention with which it has been given. So, I would like to thank the hon. Finance Minister for extending this benefit.

Last, but not least, I am very happy to inform that I have constructed a stadium in Silchar. We got help from the Government of India, we got help from the NEC and it has become another centre of sports in the North Eastern Region. It will be completed very soon and I would look forward to the Finance Minister – I will not ask for any grant, grant is all over – to come and take part in the inauguration of this stadium. He will be very

happy to see the stadium specially because he is also not from a big town – he is from a very small town – and he can see as to how the help from various people can construct a sports stadium. He will be happy to know that we have started coaching centres both for cricket as well as for other sports disciplines. Now, 90 per cent of the sportsmen are coming from the rural areas. Talent is lying in the rural areas, not in cities. With this stadium we have proved that if talent is harnessed properly we can give a lot of good sportsmen to the nation.

I do not want to repeat what Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal or Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar have said. I have left out four or five pages from my speech. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal has covered almost all the points and Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar has also covered various points, including about tea. With these words, I think that when I come on 29th to listen to the reply of the Finance Minister, I will not go unhappy.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH BADNORE (BHILWARA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand to support the financial proposals contained in the Budget for 2002-03 and the relief announced by the Finance Minister today. For the last over 50 years, we have a Budget every year in the month of February. It has been seen that in the past people used to really listen to the Budget. It used to affect the industry so much that the Budget announcements and financial proposals could ruin an industry or a person and the whole financial system.

Sir, I congratulate the Finance Minister for trying to rationalise the excise duty structure. Earlier, there used to be excise duty on one item for one year, it used to be removed the next year and it used to be brought back the third year and we could not really have a long term planning. So, this rationalisation and streamlining of the excise duty structure is very good for the country.

I was in the United States of America and that was the time they had the Budget announcements. What I saw there was that there was no interest in

the Budget, unlike we have in India.

It is a usual budget (announcement). There would be the ups and downs but they never used to affect the people. They are not used to look at it as the people in India do. This is because of some systems, which have been put into place. There is no volatility or erraticness in this.

Sir, I congratulate the Finance Minister that he has given some excise concessions that we have asked for in the textile industry. The textile industry is a very large industry, which affects hundreds and thousands of people. It also affects my constituency because I hail from Bhilwara, which is a textile city. The Finance Minister has given us a level playing field to counter the onslaught of the Chinese cloth and also stand up in the world on exports of cloth. I congratulate him for that.

Sir, I have a few suggestions also. There has been a hot debate whether the dividend tax should have been there or it is unnecessary. But there is some relief, which has been given by the Finance Minister in his announcement today. It is a very good relief to the extent that on any dividend of Rs.1,000/- or less, there would be no TDS. That is a very welcome step. Sir, you also know that the stock market is in doldrums for very many reasons. Although NASDAQ and NYSE have started on a different trend, the graph is going up. But the volatility in the Indian stock market, especially liquidity is not there. There are other reasons also. One of the main reasons is the dividend tax. When we had a word with the Finance Minister, he very rightly said that there are hundreds and thousands of people who are getting lakhs of rupees as dividend and they are paying zero tax on it, and that was the reason why he had put this tax. I would like to convey to him that the dividend tax has already been paid by the company and this is a double taxation especially for the people and also for the capital market and stock market which are in doldrums. A healthy capital market and stock market work on psychology. Even after this announcement, which has been heard by the whole country today, the index went down by about 30 points. So, I would like to say that you have some sort of capping for the people who are getting dividend of about one lakh or two lakhs of rupees, and that is understandable. But for the small

investor and to boost the stock market, you need to do something. It is very important that some sort of an announcement is made again so that this psychology is changed and people start investing in the stock market. I may also mention here that if the stock market goes up, the problem that we would face in UTI is this. Everyday we are reading in the newspapers about MIPs. When the redemption starts, they have to start making the payment, and you have to bail them out again.

You will have to bail them out again. So, if you have a healthy stock market, this problem of the UTI also will be reduced to a great extent.

Another suggestion that I have to make, through you, Sir, to the Finance Minister is that the housing industry is looking up. We need to boost it. In this Budget, a new section, 50C, is being added. We all know that there used to be 37IB which was a failure. There were a number of properties which the Income Tax Department thought that they were under-valued. When they bought themselves and when they went into the market with the same properties, they lost money on them. That is done away with. But we have the section 50C. Now, what is section 50C? Sir, section 50C is determining the full value of consideration in case of transfer of immovable property. The seller will have to pay now capital gains tax based on stamp duty value on Department's valuation, officer's valuation and not on the real transaction value. Now what it really means is that it will be another hardship to the seller since he has received the real values but will have to pay tax on imaginary sale values which he has not even received. The stamp duty usually is paid by the buyer and the seller is being punished. When the housing industry is looking up, I feel, this is going to be detrimental and something should be done on that.

The other point that I want to stress on is this. There is a section, 133A, in the Income Tax Act. The authorities have been empowered to impound the books and documents as per this Budget. This will prove a tool for blackmailing the people that they are surveying. They can ask for the Xerox copies. But if the books are taken away or the documents are taken away, I think, you are handing out some powers to the authorities, which should not be given.

I would also like to mention one thing regarding the assessment of income tax on limited issues under section 143. Under section 143, an assessing officer, if he has reason to believe that an assessee has made a claim of any loss, exemption, deduction, allowance or relief which is inadmissible, will issue a notice under the proposed new clause 143(2) whereby the assessee would be asked to produce evidence and particulars in support of his claim and then the AO will pass an order. However, if the AO feels that the case requires further scrutiny on further issues, he will be free to issue a notice initiating comprehensive scrutiny to the return. This would mean again blackmailing of the assessee by the officers since every case would be subject to scrutiny and harassment. What I feel is that there should be some sort of check on the AOs, Income Tax Officers also.

Whatever proposals have been announced are welcome.

In the end, what I feel is that whatever suggestions I have made should be looked into.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): Sir, before delving into the contents of the Finance Bill, I would prefer to draw an analogy from the Old Testament image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The head of the image was made of fine gold, the arms and breast were made of silver, the belly and thighs were made of brass, the legs were made of iron and the feet were made of partly iron and partly clay. When a stone was thrown in the direction of the feet, it crumbled into pieces. I have discovered the feet of clay of our Minister of Finance in the inconsistencies of his policies. He has already earned the distinction of being a 'rollback' Finance Minister. He is well adept in playing somersault as and when exigencies warrant.

In the last financial year, he had proposed exemption of dividend tax and income from mutual funds but within a span of one year he has again changed his tack and proposed to make tax on dividend and mutual fund income payable in the hands of the recipients. He has also abolished the ten per cent distribution tax on campanies and mutual funds dividend and mutual fund income distributed by the companies. Naturally, this kind of a

measure would act as a disincentive to the common investor. He has discovered the common investor as his pocket borough to manage his finances but I would like to draw his attention to the fact that at present the Indian economy is suffering from low growth, low investment, fiscally challenged and household constraints due to lack of back up interest. In the meanwhile, if these measures are adopted, it will then create a problem for those common investors and they will develop an aversion in investing their funds in capital market or in share market.

Sir, in his Budget proposal, the hon. Minister of Finance has proposed tax revenue to the tune of Rs. 1,72,965 crore. May I ask the hon. Minister of Finance that, ever in his career, has he achieved the revenue target as was proposed by him? He has never succeeded in achieving his revenue target during the whole period of his career as the Minister of Finance of India. Therefore, I would suggest him to follow suit, to emulate former Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, who never failed in achieving his target.

Sir, in the year 1994-95 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 62,742 crore and in the Revised Estimate, it was found that Rs. 64,988 crore had been achieved. In the year 1995-96 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 74,347 crore and in the Revised Estimate, Rs. 81,088 crore had been collected. Similarly, in the year 1996-97 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 97,310 crore and in the Revised Estimate, net tax revenue was achieved to the tune of Rs. 97,212 crore. In the year 1997-98 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 1,13,393 crore and in the Revised Estimate, net tax revenue was achieved to the tune of Rs. 99,158 crore. In the year 1998-99, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 1,16,857 crore and in the Revised Estimate, net tax revenue was achieved to the tune of Rs. 1,09,537 crore. In 1999-2000 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 1,32,365 crore, but the achievement was in the region of Rs. 1,26,465 crore. In the year 2000-01 Budget Estimate, net tax revenue was proposed at Rs. 1,46,209 crore and the

achievement was Rs. 1,44,403 crore. Again, there was a shortfall.

16.00 hrs.

Again there is a shortfall. Similarly, in 2001-02, in the Budget Estimate, the net tax revenue proposed was Rs.1,63,031 crore and in the Revised Estimate, Rs.1,42,348 crore was achieved. In this year's Budget, that is, 2002-03, the net tax revenue has been proposed to the tune of Rs.1,72,965 crore. From my account, it has been clear that our Finance Minister has never been able to collect the revenue as has been proposed by his Ministry. Therefore, to be a competent Finance Minister, one should be a competent collector also. Better follow the example of Todarmal. This year, the Finance Minister has unfurled umpteen tax measures which have already cast a distress shadow on the economic horizon of our country in general and for the common investors in particular.

In the year 2001-02 the revenue received has also recorded a shortfall of 13.22 per cent, compared to the Budget Estimate of 2001-02. The Customs and Excise Duties have missed the target by a margin of 21 per cent and 7 per cent. However, the Finance Minister has brought down the Customs Duty in compliance with WTO guidelines. May I ask the hon. Finance Minister how much revenue is being lost due to the exemptions he has proposed in this year's Budget?

There is one more disturbing aspect. As has been observed, the growth of economy is declining at an alarming pace. In the Ninth Plan, the growth was targeted at 6.5 per cent but we have achieved only 5.4 per cent. The Indian economy is passing through a difficult phase. The country's Gross Domestic Product growth has slipped .to four per cent in 2000-01 compared to 6.1 per cent a year ago. The real growth in GDP in 2001-02 is expected to be 5.4 per cent as estimated by the Central Statistical Organisation. The average annual growth rate during the Ninth Five Year plan is now estimated at 5.4 per cent, which is lower than the Plan target of 6.5 per cent. In the Tenth Five Year Plan, the growth has been targeted at eight per cent. May I ask the hon. Finance Minister whether he holds any magic wand to catapult our growth to the desired level?

Sir, what is our domestic saving now? Our domestic saving is in the region of 23.4 per cent and the domestic investment is at 24 per cent. In recent years the growth in real gross domestic capital formation has shown instability. The growth rate of real gross domestic capital formation recorded a significant deceleration from 15.7 per cent to two per cent in the year 2000-2001. There is a steep fall of minus 1.7 per cent in the public sector savings in the year 2001 due to an increase in the dis-savings. We all know that as per the formula of increased capital output ratio, India needs 32 per cent of domestic saving in order to reach the growth rate of 8 per cent. I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Finance as to where does this money come from.

There is another area which is also an area of major concern and it is the Central Plan outlay. The Government is proposing the Central Plan outlay. But every time it is found that the Central Plan outlay is being infected by serious shortage of fund allocation. I would like to refer to a few accounts. In the Budget Estimate of 1998-99 the Central Plan outlay was fixed at Rs. 1,05,187 crore; but in the Revised Estimate it came down to Rs. 88,482 crore. In the Budget Estimate of the year 1999-2000 the Central Plan outlay was fixed at Rs. 1,03,521 crore; but in the Revised Estimate it was brought down to Rs. 96,310 crore. There is a huge slash in respect of the allocations. In the Budget Estimate of the year 2000-2001 the Central Plan outlay was targeted at Rs. 1,17,334 crore and in the Revised Estimate it has been slashed to Rs. 1,08,587 crore. Similarly in the year 2001-2002 the Central Plan outlay has been duly fixed at Rs. 1,30,181 crore in the Budget Estimate; but in the Revised Estimate it was again slashed at Rs. 1,27,856 crore. Therefore, I cannot understand how will this Government meet the target of eight per cent. It is really a conundrum.

This year, the fiscal deficit has been fixed at 5.3 per cent. In the Budget Estimate of the year 2001-2002 the fiscal deficit was targeted at 4.7 per cent but it was increased to 5.7 per cent.

Therefore, the Indian economy is suffering permanently under his tenure from low growth and high fiscal deficit. Sometimes, the Government invents a whipping boy to pass over the buck. When the Government

cannot succeed in running its economy properly, suddenly, it shifts to some lame excuses. Sometimes, it is being attributed Orissa Cyclone, sometimes, it is being attributed to some exogenous factor like the Gujarat Earthquake and, sometimes, the non-performance of this Government is being attributed to the terrorist attack in the U.S. May I ask whether these are the determining variables considered by this Government? If so, then why does it require to cut taxes, to impose customs duty or give exemptions with a view to unleash growth? This is a question from my side.

The Government has proposed to reduce customs peak rate from 35 per cent to 30 per cent. It has been proposed that within the year of 2004-2005, it will be again reduced to 20 per cent. I cannot understand whether these are peak rates or mode because I know that there are so many peak rates, such as 210, 170, 115, 100, 80, 70, 55, 50, 45, 40, 25, 15, 10, and 5. Together, the total number of peak rates is 15, which in the year 1991-92 was 13. The peak rate on liquors, which was 210 per cent, has been reduced to 182 per cent following the dictates of WTO. So, Sir, there are still various kinds of distortions and litigations, insofar as customs rates are concerned. Therefore, I would request the Government to further rationalise and simplify the structure, which has already been recommended by Virmani Committee.

The Government has brought down taxes on aluminium, copper, tin etc., which has created a concern for the non-ferrous industry. Insofar as MODVAT is concerned, still it is prone to litigation. Here also, further rationalisation and simplification are required.

Sir, in the Ninth Plan document also, it has been considered that during the Ninth Plan period, a chronic unemployment situation could arise -- six millions in absolute terms. We know that the Government has only invested merely 1.82 per cent in agriculture sector and in social and employment sector together.

Employment opportunities in our country has been declining sharply and is one of the reasons for our social tensions. The Ninth Plan document has

raised an alarm on this issue. Lack of employment opportunities is not only because of shortage in working opportunities but is also due to mismatch of a spatial pattern of job creation opportunities and growth of labour force on one hand and because of labour mobility on the other hand.

Sir, the micro-fundamentals are also not performing well. To give an example, the regulatory mechanism has totally failed in respect of banks, co-operative banks and the stock market. Therefore, the negative factors are playing a predominant role in our economy where 65 per cent of the money of our public sector banks are being locked up in Government securities.

Sir, many of the hon. Members of the Treasury Benches were boasting of the performance of this Government in agriculture. This Government has coined a new slogan this year, namely, *`kisan ki azadi'*. I would like to advice this Government to re-christen this slogan as *`kisan ki barbadi'*. When about six million tonnes of foodgrains are rotting in the godowns, our farmers are committing suicide. This is a very shameful thing.

Sir, the hon. Finance Minister in his Budget speech has proposed amendment to the Milk and Dairy Products Act to remove restrictions on new milk processing capacity. We must recognise that it is by the sweat of the grower and by the toil of our farmers that we had been able to achieve Green Revolution. In the same way, it was because of the sweat and toil of our farmers only that we achieved White Revolution. By accomplishing Green Revolution our country was turned from being a food-deficit country into a food surplus country. Similarly, by accomplishing White Revolution, our country was turned from being a milk-deficit country into a milk-surplus country. Now, India is producing milk to the tune of 81 million tonnes. India is regarded as the single largest milk-producing country in the world. But we do not have enough surplus milk for export. Therefore, our position in export map in regard to milk is very poor.

About 80 million common people, most of them village women, got economic empowerment from this sector. 367 Districts have already been covered by milk cooperatives. The number of milk societies in India is

more than 80,000. By this, you can easily assume the importance of milk Sector in our country. Live stock sector contributes 28 per cent of the total agricultural output in our economy.

After the amendment to Milk and Milk Products Control Order, the entire milk sector will be exposed to the vagaries of market forces, to the freak of multinationals. It will really pose a serious problem for those downtrodden people of our country who are earning their livelihood by selling precious milk. By a single stroke , this Government has demolished the milk-shed concept which has been built by our strenuous efforts for years together. You all are aware of Operation Flood. Due to Operation Flood and due to the replication of Operation Flood, now we are enjoying the status of milk-sufficient country in the world. That dream is being dashed by this amendment.

Milk-shed concept is unique in nature. It is a geographically demarcated area in which only the dairies that are registered will be entitled to collect milk and exploit the potential in that particular area in an exclusive way. Those milk cooperatives have, for years, been convincing the local people to produce milk. Those moderate and medium potential areas of milk have been have transformed into the areas of milk surplus. But now if one is to obtain a licence to process milk of more than 10,000 litres , no restriction will be required.. Now everybody is free to install a milk-processing unit without any restriction, without having any licence. So, you can easily assume that the entire sector will be exposed to the multinational companies.

Milk and milk derivatives are in surplus in other countries, especially in Canada and Australia. Now anyone can import milk and milk derivatives from those countries into India by virtue of WTO rules. Therefore, the entire milk sector is shuddering with fear. Therefore, I would urge upon the Finance Minister to reconsider specially this amendment and, if possible, try to hive off this amendment from your other related proposals so as to save this sector from being ruined.

Sir, the Finance Minister has proposed crop-diversification and food economy. I must appreciate it. It is because only the food-processing industry, this time, can trigger a fresh wave of employment opportunities stemming from transport, storage, cooling, refrigeration and so on.

India is such a country where we produce fruits and vegetables in abundance. However, we cannot exploit these fruits and vegetables due to lack of proper infrastructure, proper marketing facilities, proper storage facilities and so on and so forth.

Sir, can you imagine that 40 per cent of our fruits and vegetables are being wasted away every year just merely due to non-availability and non-existence of proper marketing, proper processing and proper infrastructure, which is equivalent to the total consumption of United Kingdom? Can you imagine that 80 per cent of citrus fruits are being wasted away every year! By investing Rs. 10 million we can create 39,000 employment opportunities in this particular area. But as far as value addition is concerned, we are very much poor in this particular area. We can only be able to produce 7 per cent value addition to this food processing industry at this present stage, which is required to be hiked at 35 per cent so as to compete with the other food processing giants in the world. China is emerging as a food processing giant after their accession to the WTO.

Therefore, if we start with a new vigour and new initiative in this particular sector, we can achieve a huge growth as well as huge employment opportunities.

Therefore, Sir, this particular area requires a huge investment. I do not know how much sum our Finance Minister has earmarked in this particular sector of food processing industry.

There is no way now. We have to recognise that agri is a process and food is a product. We have to recognise that agree-business is an industry. Therefore, for food and agribusiness, agriculture and food initiative policy is required to be conceived as early as possible.

As far as agriculture is concerned, I would like to refer to a few lines from the Planning Commission's 'Highlights of the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Ninth Five Year Plan 1997-2002' on Agriculture and Allied Sector. It has been stated there has been a deceleration in the growth rate of production of foodgrains and non-food crop during Nineties from 3.54 per cent to 1.8 per cent and from 4.02 per cent to 3.17 per cent per annum respectively. The growth rate of milk and fish production during Nineties was recorded at 4.78 per cent and 4.7 per cent respectively.

Just a few minutes earlier, I had raised the issue of milk production. We have, further, accomplished another revolution which may be called a Blue Revolution. We have been able to be sufficient in fish and marine production.

We must admit that agriculture is the backbone of our economy. It provides employment; it provides food; it provides food security and furthermore, it provides raw materials to major industries like sugar, jute, textiles and so on. But it is disheartening to note that plan allocation to this sector has been gradually reducing. In the First Five Year Plan period, 37 per cent was allocated to this sector. Now, it has been the victim of apathy and neglect. Allocation of funds has been reduced to a margin of 20 per cent. On the other hand, agriculture which used to contribute more than 33 per cent to our GDP has been coming down only to 26.8 per cent. In the din and bustle of market forces, agriculture has been the victim of apathy. It has lost its pre-eminence. Under the impact of trilogy – privatisation, globalisation and liberalisation – agriculture has been gasping at its last. Therefore, this sector needs more attention because more than two-thirds of workforce still engaged in this sector.

I would like to draw the attention of this House to a few major areas of concern. We are all talking about agriculture. We know that without agriculture India cannot sustain and India cannot survive. But it has also to be observed and admitted that the fruit of Green Revolution has already been used up. So, we have to innovate something new. Our Finance Minister is in the habit of following the long hackneyed way. He has to discard all his hackneyed ways before driving his revenue-chariot.

What I intend to say is that we have already used up the fruit of Green Revolution. Now, DNA, fingerprinting, tissue culture, technologies of transgenic seeds or crops, etc. are holding key to agriculture production. But if we want to equip our country with this quality, then we have to step up allocation in research and development. What have we been observing? We have been observing that in India, in the area of research and development, the fund allocated is in the range of 0.16 per cent to 0.23 per cent.

श्री लक्ष्मण सिंह (राजगढ़) : सभापति महोदय, सदन में बहुत कम लोग उपस्थित हैं। फाइनेंस बिल पर चर्चा हो रही है। संसदीय कार्य मंत्री सदन में नहीं हैं और हम फाइनेंस बिल पर चर्चा कर रहे हैं। ...(व्यवधान) सभापति महोदय, इतने महत्वपूर्ण विाय पर चर्चा हो रही है ...(व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : वित्त मंत्री सदन में मौजूद हैं।

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते (रत्नागिरि) : वित्त मंत्री जी सदन में हैं।

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, it is a very sad situation. The country is debating the Finance Bill. I entirely understand that it is the duty of every Member but does it look nice that when the Finance Bill is being debated in the House and the Finance Minister is ready to give reply to all the questions, this is the size of the ruling party and its coalition? How seriously they are taking the discussion on the Finance Bill! I am not here to non-cooperate but does it present a good image?... (*Interruptions*) It is very unfortunate. It is not an issue to fight. It is a sad state of affairs.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN SETHI): You are also equally responsible.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : I am helping by pouring in my speakers.... (*Interruptions*) Is it not the responsibility of the Government? Is it not the responsibility of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to gear up his own Government and his Party Members to pass the Finance Bill? Our job is to cooperate and we are cooperating.... (*Interruptions*)

श्री पवन कुमार बंसल (चंडीगढ़) : सदन में चार मंत्री हैं और चार बीजेपी के सदस्य हैं। ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK (ANANTNAG): You are also equally responsible.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Are your leaders not responsible? If he insists, then I demand Quorum.... (*Interruptions*)

श्री अनंत गंगाराम गीते : पहली बार चर्चा नहीं हो रही है। ...(व्यवधान)

श्री प्रियरंजन दासमुंशी : हम जिम्मेदारी निभा रहे हैं। हमें हमदर्दी है। यह अच्छा नहीं लगता है। .यह तरीका ठीक नहीं है। बहस करने की गरिमा है और क्या यह सरकार की जिम्मेदारी नहीं है। ...(व्यवधान)

श्री पवन कुमार बंसल : अगर ऐसा ही चाहते हैं, तो कोरम कर लीजिए। I insist on the quorum bell to be rung.... (*Interruptions*) Sir, we press for the quorum bell. I initiated the debate. I was asked to conclude. I did not complete my speech. I wanted more time to speak but I was asked not to speak. Now, this is what is happening in the House.... (*Interruptions*)

सभापति महोदय : कोरम के लिए घन्टी बजाई जा रही है। कोई बात रिकार्ड पर नहीं जाएगी।

The bell is being rung---

सभापति महोदय : कोरम बेल बज रही है, इसलिए कोई बात कार्यवाही में नहीं जाएगी।

सभापति महोदय : कोरम के अभाव में सदन की कार्यवाही 29 अप्रैल 2002, पूर्वाह्न 11 बजे तक के लिए स्थगित की जाती है।

16.49 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the clock on

Monday, April 29, 2002/Vaisakha 9, 1924 (Saka)